

Commentary

November 2007

What Kind of War Are We Fighting, and Can We Win It?

A Symposium

*Fouad Ajami • John R. Bolton • Max Boot • Reuel Marc Gerecht
Victor Davis Hanson • Daniel Henninger • Martin Kramer • William Kristol
Andrew C. McCarthy • David Pryce-Jones • Claudia Rosett • Amir Taheri
Ruth Wedgwood • James Q. Wilson • R. James Woolsey*

The Eliot Spitzer Show

Ira Stoll & Jacob Gershman

Faith in the Flesh

R.R. Reno

China Games

Arch Puddington

Refighting the Wars of Religion

George Weigel

Hopper's Appeal

Steven C. Munson

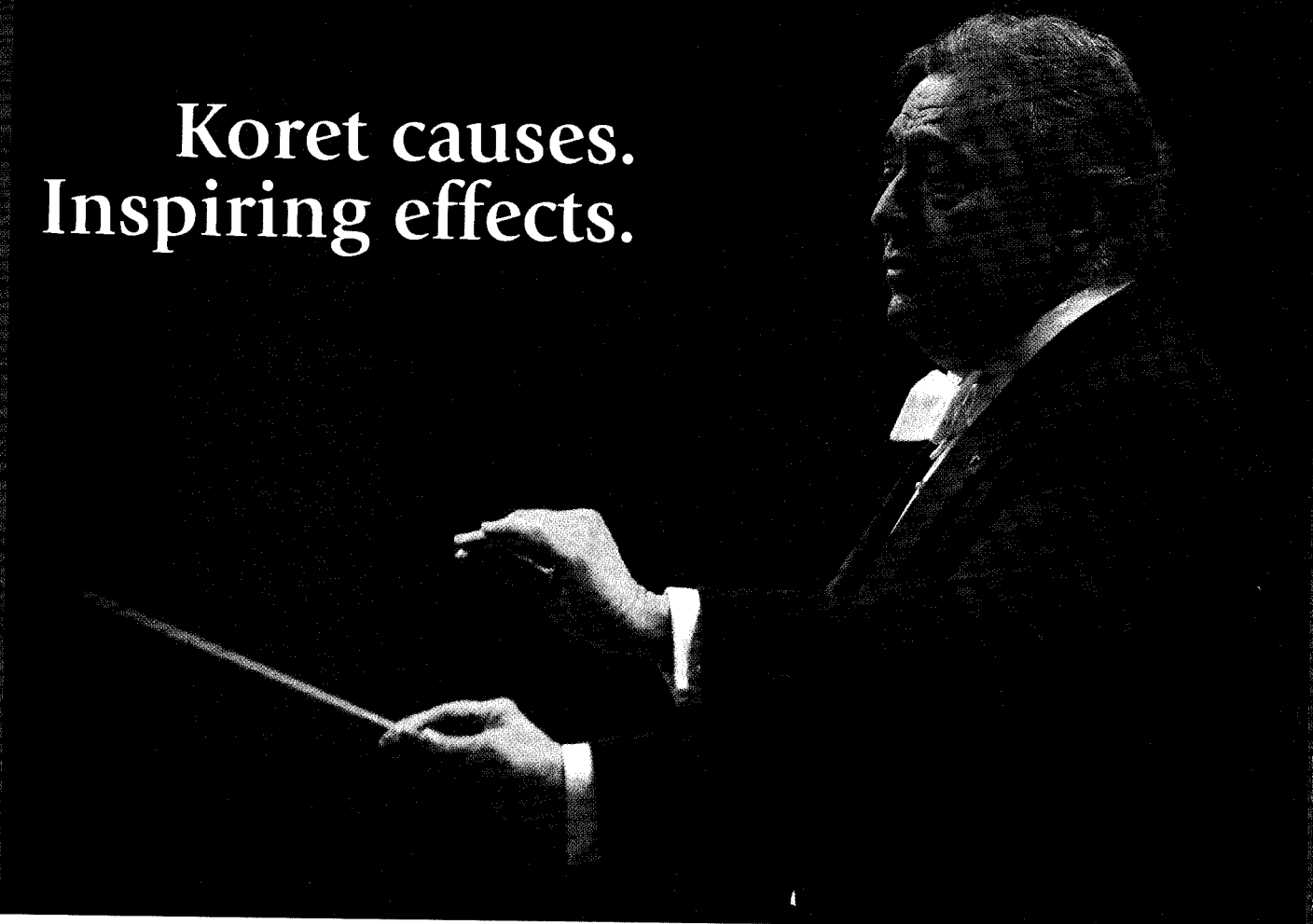
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Letters from Readers

The Bombs of World War II

TO THE EDITOR:

In "Fire from the Sky" [July-August], Algis Valiunas offers a moral defense of the Allied air campaign in World War II—a presumptuous task, given the annihilation of civilian populations that was wrought by mass-destruction bombing. And in presenting the arguments of the opposing side, including the case I make in my book, *Among the Dead Cities*, he leaves out all nuance and qualification.

Thus, from Mr. Valiunas's remarks about my book one would not gather that I say that the Allied effort in World War II was a just one, that the greatest crime the Allies could have committed was to lose the war against Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, and that the difficult and poignant question, therefore, is whether in the prosecution of that war Allied actions were universally blameless.

The weight of the evidence about what was planned and done—namely, indiscriminate saturation-bombing of civilian populations—suggests that the Allies were indeed far from blameless. (The commanders knew it, too, as we can see from the long and anxious debate about bombing that waxed for decades before the war began.) The fact that the Nazis and the Japanese did far worse things does not make a bad thing done by the Allies good. It reflects a kind of moral immaturity not to accept this.

Contrary to what Mr. Valiunas implies, I do not argue that Allied air crews should have disobeyed orders. (And yet he and I would doubtless praise an SS trooper who disobeyed orders to gun down civilians at the edge of a mass grave.) What I say is that in an ideal world, which the war situation was anything but, airmen might have been offered the choice of bombing civilians or bombing in-

dustrial and military targets of real strategic importance, and that in such a case they should have chosen the latter.

Indeed, had the money and technological resources that went into the Royal Air Force's area-bombing campaign been focused on the Nazis' long-range submarine patrols or energy supplies, the war would have ended sooner than it did. This is now uncontroversial. Many victims of the Nazis might have been spared, and the stain of the Allies' slaughter of civilians might have been avoided.

We rightly denigrate the Nazi and Japanese regimes for murdering civilians en masse, but some wish to hide under the cloak of supposed "necessity" and the license of "just cause" for the same thing done by the Allies. Even more pusillanimously, some play the numbers game, trotting out the fact that the Allies' victims were far fewer.

Mr. Valiunas takes me to

task for suggesting that "the war aims of the Allies then were morally congruent with those of al Qaeda now," but I was very careful to say that in one respect and one only—namely, the effort to weaken a nation's will by killing as many of its people as possible—is there a similarity between the September 11 attacks and area-bombing (whoever carries it out).

What is the difference, in the end, between putting a pistol to the heads of a woman and her child and dropping a bomb on them? Mere distance.

A.C. GRAYLING

University of London
London England

TO THE EDITOR:

Algis Valiunas makes many valuable observations as he surveys recent books, including my own *Choices Under Fire*, on the Allies' aerial-bombing campaign in World War II. But I would like to take issue with one of his points, which is summed

up near his conclusion: "The Allies went as far as they had to with the means at their disposal."

I wish Mr. Valiunas had responded more substantively to my own detailed arguments to the contrary. Presumably he would agree that, even in advancing so clearly a righteous cause as the Allied military effort in World War II, some deeds would be morally questionable or downright wrong. Would it be acceptable to kill 10,000 enemy civilians in order to save the life of one Allied soldier? A million? Clearly, there comes a point at which the cost in human lives vastly exceeds the military benefit gained by a specific operation.

It would be a mistake to issue a blanket condemnation of Allied bombing tactics, just as it would be a mistake to condone them indiscriminately. Historians like Richard Overy have shown that the bombing campaign played a crucial role in securing ultimate victory; equally accomplished historians like John Keegan have given us reason to question some bombing practices, both on moral and practical grounds. It seems possible, for example, that a more restrained campaign, focused primarily on transportation infrastructure, fuel production, and strictly military targets like air bases, might have secured an Allied victory sooner than did the plastering of enemy cities with firebombs.

Some cities did harbor major military assets, and therefore constituted legitimate targets for sustained attack. The ball-bearing plants in Schweinfurt, Germany, for example, constituted crucial nodal points in German military produc-

tion, a fact that justified the 600 civilian deaths brought about by American raids there. But with respect to the majority of the bombed cities, calculating the balance between the value of military targets and the value of civilian lives was a much more dicey affair. In the cases of Dresden and Tokyo, the balance was overwhelming: both cities constituted targets of mediocre military value. Allied planners knew that bombarding them would kill an astronomically high number of civilians while offering little hope of forcing the enemy to surrender. These kinds of attacks were atrocities, terrible mistakes made by nations fighting a noble cause.

The decisive argument, for me, has to do with timing. In the war's early years, Allied bombers were going in against long odds, using technologies that rendered precision-bombing almost impossible. But as the war went on, the Allies steadily moved toward ever greater technological mastery and air superiority in the skies over Europe and Japan. Under such circumstances, the Anglo-Americans could have chosen a policy of restrained, carefully focused attacks that aimed primarily at fuel, transport, and military targets. But the record shows the exact opposite. The airborne slaughter of enemy civilians by the Allies reached its climax in the last twelve months of the war.

Mr. Valiunas concludes his article by drawing lessons from World War II for today's conflict with Muslim extremists. The lesson I draw is the following: it is a terrible mistake to stoop to the level of your

enemies, if there is any way you can possibly avoid it. The vicious disregard for human life exhibited by al Qaeda does not oblige us to adopt a symmetrical policy of brutality and immorality. Today, as in World War II, an intelligent policy of effective self-defense need not be divorced from a humane values and basic decency. Otherwise, in the effort to save our necks, we run the risk of losing our souls.

MICHAEL BESS

*Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee*

TO THE EDITOR:

As a son of Würzburg, one of the German cities destroyed by Allied bombers during World War II, I have long been preoccupied with the questions Algis Valiunas takes up in his article. Although, born in 1972, I have only second-hand knowledge of old Würzburg, the appearance of the new city is a permanent reminder of what happened in 1945. In any case, I hope the unease I felt about some of Mr. Valiunas's arguments is more than just a gut feeling.

I am convinced, in the first place, that the Allies' own rationale for the bombings, the lowering of German morale, was not borne out in practice. Many historians hold that the bombings braced the sturdiness of the Germans in "defending" their country. This seems to be confirmed by the way the Nazis exploited "Allied atrocities" for propaganda purposes. The brutality of the attacks certainly made it harder for dissenters to resist the Nazi line. Mr. Valiunas disregards this crucial issue.

The moral equivalence that Mr. Valiunas detects in

the comparison drawn by Jörg Friedrich (in his *The Fire*) between the Allied bombardment and the Holocaust is indeed troubling. I have witnessed similar perversions myself. At last year's official commemoration of the destruction of my hometown, Paul Celan's Holocaust poem "*Die Todesfuge*" ("Death Fugue") was read. Even though the desire to be united in mourning with the victims of the Holocaust may be understandable, Germans must acknowledge that the destruction of Germany was, in the final analysis, a consequence of German aggression. I should note here that the German edition of Friedrich's book was criticized in the German press on precisely such grounds.

Still, moral clarity demands that evil on both sides be called by its name. The bombing of my hometown, which had neither military infrastructure nor heavy industry and was (apart from wounded soldiers) almost devoid of grown-up men in the spring of 1945, remains unjustifiable. Contrary to Mr. Valiunas, no necessities "compelled" the Allies to destroy it. By clouding the issue with talk of "tragic dilemmas," "righteous fury," and men "caught in a tragic vise," he betrays a touch of moral haziness and relativism of his own.

PASCAL FISCHER

*University of Würzburg
Würzburg, Germany*

TO THE EDITOR:

Algis Valiunas's extended review of four new books on the air war against Germany in World War II passes over Frederick Taylor's 2004 book *Dresden*. That book contains a crucial piece

You'll love Israel from the first "Shalom."

Yes, there are cowboys in Israel. The only difference is they say "Shalom" instead of "Howdy." This is Ferstman Avshalon, who looks after several hundred head of cattle on a 1,000 acre ranch in the Golan Heights. His father took him to a John Wayne Western when he was 12, forever dashing his mother's hopes that he would become a doctor and part-time violinist. He learned riding, roping and ranching at a Kibbutz as a teenager, and he's been ranching for 14 years. He now works his own spread with his wife and two young boys, who love computer games as much as horses. He's also an accomplished nature photographer, and as he says - "what better subject than the golden light of the Golan?" Israel. We hope to see you soon. Shalom.

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of evidence disputing Mr. Valiunas's view that the Allied bombing of Dresden was justified.

Although, by 1945, Winston Churchill had belatedly denounced terror bombing and "wanton destruction," British Air Marshal Arthur "Bomber" Harris insisted that Dresden should be bombed on account of its munitions works and "key transportation points." Three great railway routes met there, it was correctly pointed out.

But Taylor reproduces Bomber Command's map of the "13th/14th February 1945 Dresden Primary Target," and it shows that the raid was to be concentrated on Dresden's population center, the historic *Altstadt* and its outskirts. In the event, not a single stray bomb fell on the nearby railroad freight yard to which Harris had referred. Similarly, when the Royal Air Force bombed the wine city of Heilbronn, it sent 282 Lancaster bombers, but only 27 of them targeted the railroad freight yard of that town. Ninety percent of the force was (successfully) directed at the population center, killing 7,000 civilians.

As an aside, Mr. Valiunas neglects to note that Harris's remark about German cities not being "worth the bones of one British grenadier" was no doubt an allusion of sorts to Otto von Bismarck's remark that the Balkans were not "worth the bones of one Pomeranian grenadier."

GUNTHER GREULICH
Lynnfield, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

I read with great interest Algis Valiunas's extremely fair-minded article on recent books in the long pro-

cession of studies about aerial bombing during World War II. It seems to me that only one—Marshall De Bruhl's *Firestorm: Allied Airpower and the Destruction of Dresden*—amounts to a proper piece of military history. Not that I agree with all of his arguments (though I have to agree with most of the facts he presents, since a great many of them were presented several years ago in my own book, *Dresden: Tuesday, February 13, 1945*). But his conclusions are grounded in the military and technological realities of the war, and are more interesting and sound than those of the other writers.

I have debated A.C. Grayling, author of *Among the Dead Cities*, in public forums. He is a profoundly decent (and extraordinarily intelligent) philosopher who, though he tries to deal fairly with the historical material, cannot help being guided by essentially ahistorical criteria, chief among them an underlying conviction that killing human beings, even in war, is mostly wrong and even criminal. His arguments are answerable, and Mr. Valiunas does a fine job answering them.

Jörg Friedrich, author of *The Fire: The Bombing of Germany 1940-1945*, is another matter. (I have debated him, too.) His method is to annihilate perceived opponents, present or historical, by all means available. Thus the bizarre and rather creepy linguistic excesses documented by Mr. Valiunas—comparing Allied bomber crews to SS *Einsatzgruppen*, air-raid shelters to gas chambers, and so on. Friedrich is all black and white, with no shades of gray. If the Allies killed many German civilians, this can only be because that was

their wicked intent all along. The same goes for the destruction of German art treasures, landmarks, and libraries—a clear case of premeditated cultural genocide. And the Allied air campaign was in any case a complete waste of time and resources. Such distortions mar what would otherwise be a stimulating and original account of the war.

As for Dresden, of course it could and arguably should have been spared. Who would not wish for the ability to travel back in time to the meetings of Allied commanders in 1945 to argue on behalf of the city, its people, and its unique and irreplaceable wonders? All fine and good, but that is not history. History means trying to understand what happened, when it happened. What is required is a detached analysis of the times, the forces involved, the feelings and calculations of those responsible for decisions and their execution, and the larger imperatives that conditioned the military means used. With the Allied air campaign as with most subjects, one will not always arrive at conclusions that please the moralists or the self-satisfied patriots.

FREDERICK TAYLOR
Cornwall, England

TO THE EDITOR:

There is one factor about the Allied air campaign that Algis Valiunas does not consider. Especially in the early years of the war, when invading the continent was not yet feasible, bombing represented the most effective means of attacking Germany. And in response to the Allies' growing mastery of the skies, Germany, for its part, had to devote much treasure and resources to-

ward building defensive aircraft and anti-aircraft munitions. This became a huge drain on the German war economy.

LAWRENCE BRISKIN
Centerville, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR:

Having been in Europe during World War II and witnessed the Nazis' malevolence firsthand, I have little patience for the fastidious moralism exhibited by the critics of the Allies' conduct of the war whose work Algis Valiunas surveys. If these critics had begun their studies with the Nazis' deliberate and unprovoked devastation of Rotterdam, Belgrade, Warsaw, London, and Coventry, I wonder if they could as easily censure those who fought to stop the force responsible.

EUGENE FELDMAN
Lewistown, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR:

Algis Valiunas's fine article is a grim reminder of the locations under Nazi control that were *not* bombed but should have been. Why was there no "fire from the sky" rained on Auschwitz, Treblinka, and the other slaughterhouses, and the railroad hubs and poison-gas factories that served them? Not a new question, but one for which a satisfactory answer has yet to be found.

HARRY I. GREENFIELD
Wheaton, Maryland

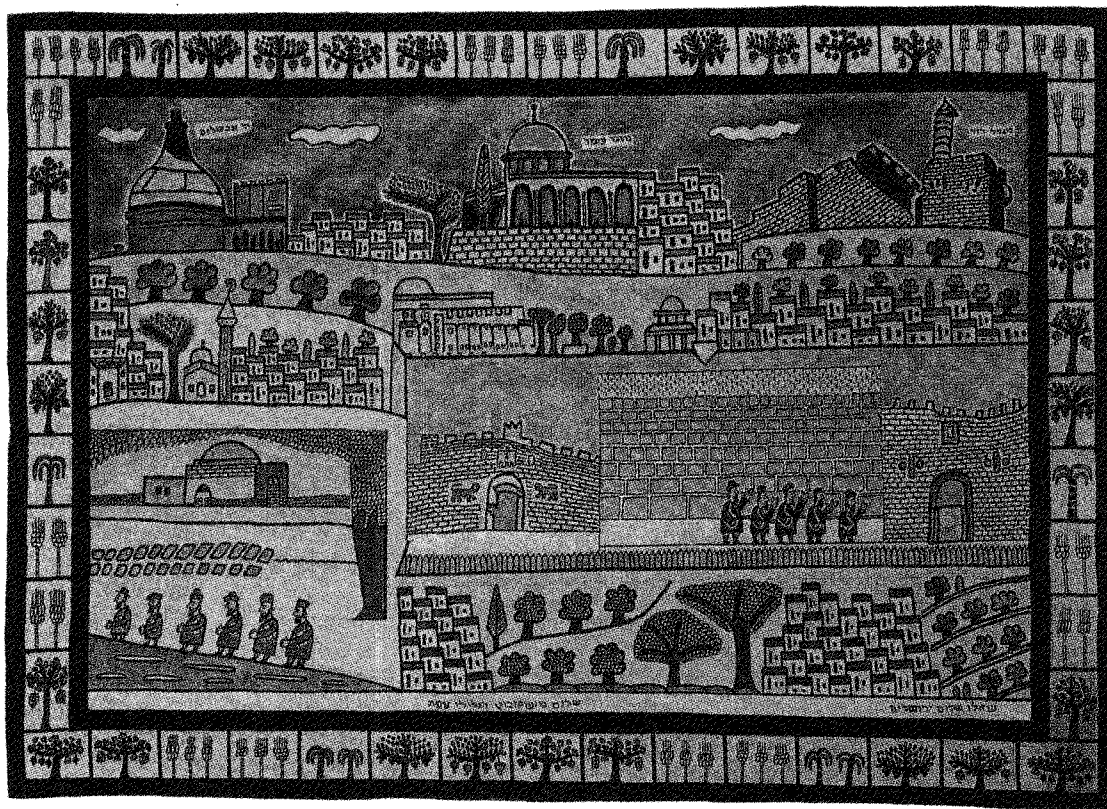
ALGIS VALIUNAS writes:

A.C. Grayling accuses me of plowing heedlessly through the careful nuance and scruple of his argument; but if there are nuance and scruple, they are concealed behind bluster. There is no nuance to Mr. Grayling's

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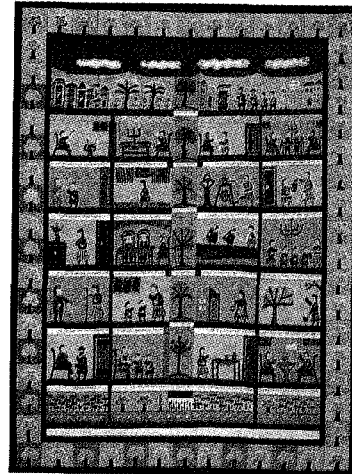
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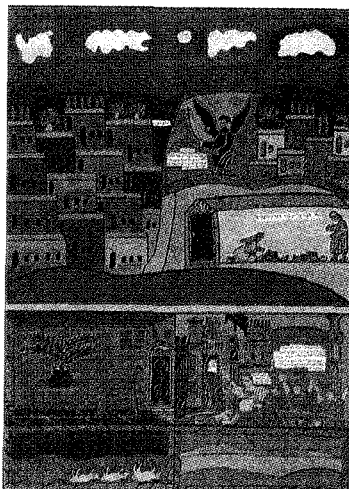
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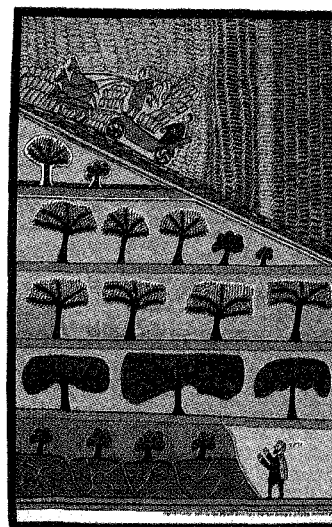
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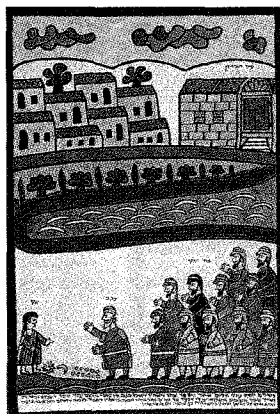


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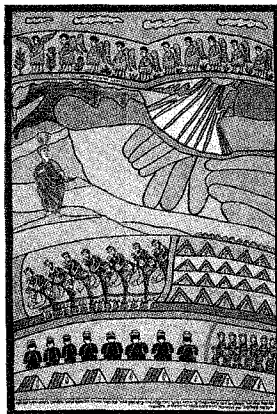
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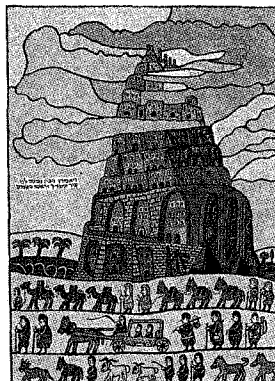
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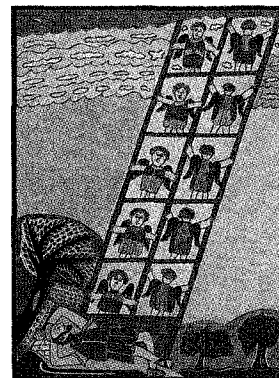
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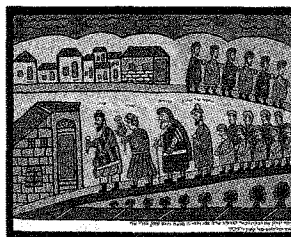
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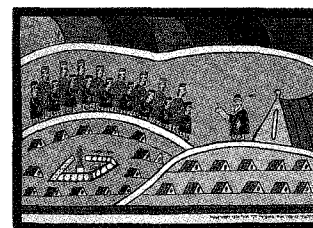
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statement in his book: "To say that the principle underlying 9/11, Hamburg, and Hiroshima is the same is to say that the same moral judgment applies to all three." Moral judgments have to do with ends and means. If the same moral judgment applies to 9/11 and Hamburg, then either the ends must be congruent,

or the means must be so foul that distinctions between the ends are insignificant—which amounts to a judgment of moral equivalence between the Allies in World War II and al Qaeda today.

Mr. Grayling does indeed say precisely and forcefully in his book that Allied aircrews should have disobeyed orders. Thus, after

declaring that area bombing was unnecessary, disproportionate, inhumane, immoral, and very wrong, he writes: "And now there come some very hard questions for us to ask ourselves about our airmen—our own kinsmen. Should airmen have refused to carry out area-bombing raids? Yes." Only after making this cat-

egorical judgment that appears to deal with the world as it is does Mr. Grayling retreat into the fantasy of "the hypothetical ideal world which does not exist and certainly not in wartime."

What possible significance, then, does this hypothetical ideal have in the discussion of actual moral choice in time of war? Mr. Grayling is either a very astute writer who wants the full rhetorical benefit of having it both ways—the thrill of the bold and sweeping denunciation of Allied wickedness, and the shrewd hedging that the hypothetical ideal provides—or a very poor writer who muddles his argument thoroughly. I am not sure which is worse.

Mr. Grayling also declares that I fecklessly attempt to "make a bad thing done by the Allies good." I never say that the bombing was good. I say it was a tragic eventuality of war. War is an ineradicable feature of the human condition and of the human propensity for evil, and it is sometimes a moral necessity for decent nations to resort to it. Whether moral philosophers protest or not, the peacetime rules do not apply in time of war: the "long and anxious debate" about the decency of bombing civilians was abruptly ended when war actually broke out and the Nazis devastated Warsaw from the air.

Vengeance is only too natural a response to profound injury, and even ordinarily good men will return evil for evil under sufficient provocation. As Arthur Harris remarked while watching the East End of London burn during the worst night of the Blitz, "They are sowing the

contentions

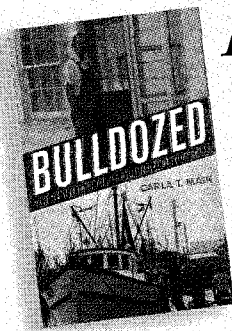
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BULLDOZED

'KELO,' EMINENT DOMAIN AND THE AMERICAN LUST FOR LAND

by Carla Main | ISBN: 978-1-59403-193-9 | \$25.95

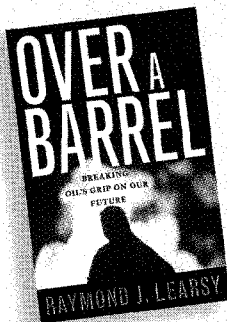
No domestic policy issue more angers or galvanizes the public than the controversy over eminent domain. Veteran journalist Carla Main delivers an incisive expose on this practice as she traces the history of eminent domain from our Founding to the recent U.S. Supreme Court case, *Kelo v. New London*. Along the way, Main relates the story of the Gore family of Freeport, Texas, and their struggle to hold onto their 56-year-old family business.

IN PRAISE OF PREJUDICE

THE NECESSITY OF PRECONCEIVED IDEAS

By Theodore Dalrymple | ISBN: 978-1-594032-02-8 | \$20.00

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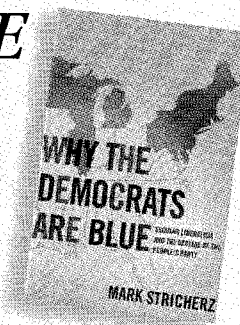
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wind." And as Thomas Mann, generally considered a more civilized type than Bomber Harris, remarked, entreating his German countrymen to consider the fate of his bombed-out hometown of Lübeck: "I think of Coventry, and have no objection to the lesson that everything must be paid for. Did Germany believe that she would never have to pay for the atrocities that her leap into barbarism seemed to allow?"

Michael Bess subjects the case for area-bombing to a *reductio ad absurdum*. One admits that no statesman or general would be willing to kill a million enemy civilians to spare the life of a single Allied soldier. But such an absurd moral calculation has nothing to do with the genuine and painful reckonings of prudence that marked Allied conduct during the war, of which one can only say: *these* means for *these* ends may be terrible but are acceptable.

What does World War II teach us about our current circumstances? Mr. Bess and I evidently come to different conclusions. In his history of that war, Winston Churchill refers again and again to the Allies' failed hope—first of preserving the peace by looking the other way while Germany rearmed, then of stopping Germany in the war's early going—until the golden word "hope" clicks like tin. Machiavelli had taught that hope may be a Christian virtue but it is not a political one, and the Allies learned this lesson in the most painful fashion.

To hope that militant Islam, demonstrably vicious and mad, will not use the atomic bomb once it possesses it is an offense against

prudence with potentially world-shattering consequences. The "humane values and basic decency" professed by Mr. Bess demand that the Iranian regime never be allowed to develop nuclear weapons. President Ahmadinejad's fevered call for the destruction of Israel is his *Mein Kampf*, and must be taken seriously, as Hitler's insane animadversions were not until it was too late. If Iran or one of its terrorist proxies launches a nuclear strike against Israel or the United States, it will inevitably be answered in kind, and likely with desolating overkill.

That is the chain of evil—truly a risk to our necks and our souls—that is to be avoided by measures that would seem drastic in ordinary circumstances. There was a time when Hitler could have been stopped, and the Holocaust, and Hamburg, and Dresden, been avoided. This is the time for stopping Iran before its atomic dreams become the world's nightmare.

In my own small way, I share Pascal Fischer's sorrow for the fate of Würzburg. My father, his mother, and his two brothers, refugees from the Red Army and the Stalinist terror that had overrun their native Lithuania, were living in Würzburg when the firestorm ravaged the city. My father used to say that they were hiding in the cracks in the war, and the British bombed even the cracks. My uncle Vytautas nearly died in the bombing; of the 200 people in his air-raid shelter, he was one of seven who survived the night.

My uncle is a brave man—he did time in a Nazi prison for resistance activi-

ties during the German occupation of Lithuania, and in the 1950's he was a U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency spy in Berlin—but the night of the firestorm turned a patch of his hair permanently white. He hates the British, whom he considers barbarians, to this day. I do not know how Mr. Fischer overlooked the lament in my essay for the destruction of Würzburg, and of other cities "that could not by any stretch be construed as of military importance." There were strategic reasons for bombing Hamburg and Dresden; there was none for Würzburg. War, to repeat, makes even decent men and nations complicit to one degree or another in evil. As for righteous fury and the tragic vise, I refer Mr. Fischer to the Thomas Mann quotation above.

I do not know where Gunther Greulich gets his information about an undamaged railroad freight yard, to which Bomber Harris never actually referred in the first place. Here is what Frederick Taylor writes about the damage to the Dresden railway operation on February 15, 1945:

That same day, [General Erich] Hampe's repair gangs—mainly Allied prisoners of war, augmented with some forced laborers—began working 'round the clock on replacing track. The general had to bring in his own equipment and communications, since the administrative apparatus of the railways in Dresden was almost completely destroyed. The vital north-south line connecting the Neustadt station and Hauptbahnhof via

the railway bridge was completely wrecked. The Neustadt goods yards were all but destroyed, and the Friedrichstadt marshaling yards were very badly hit. Eight hundred coaches and wagons had burned out as a result of the RAF raids alone. The American air raid on February 14 knocked out the Friedrichstadt passenger station completely, and demolished another forty-five tracks in the Friedrichstadt marshaling yard. To an inexperienced eye, the damage must have seemed irreparable.

I am grateful to Frederick Taylor for his generous words about my essay, and even more grateful for his excellent book on Dresden, which I have just finished reading. It is the best book I know about the air war in Europe, and I am sorry I was not aware of it when writing my piece.

I agree with Lawrence Briskin, and thank him for his suggestion. I also agree with Eugene Feldman, and so would Thomas Mann. With Harry I. Greenfield I can only grieve.

Jerusalem

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz argues that the Jews are a "chosen people," adducing the fact that they have survived throughout history and excelled in manifold ways. He further maintains that Jewish chosenness—the "scandal of particularity," in the formulation he cites of Christian theologians—is regarded by many Jews



Iran, Hizbullah, Hamas and the Global Jihad: A New Conflict Paradigm for the West

Amb. Dore Gold, Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Moshe Yaalon, Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Dr. Shimon Shapira,
Daniel Diker, Uzi Rubin, Dr. Martin Kramer, Lt. Col. (Res.) Jonathan D. Halevi

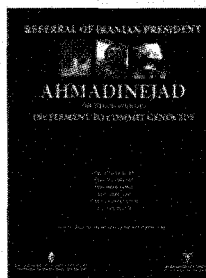
Iran is more determined than ever to achieve regional hegemony in the Middle East and is fueling regional instability from Iraq to Lebanon. Moreover, radical Sunni militancy, led by al-Qaeda, has transferred many of its main centers of operations to the heart of the Middle East after the fall of the Taliban regime. Under such conditions, were Israel to concede the Jordan Valley, for example, it would likely expose itself to a steep increase in infiltration to the strategic West Bank, including weapons and volunteers, and thus face the same threats it confronted with the Philadelphi corridor after the Gaza pullout.



Defensible Borders for a Lasting Peace

MK Dr. Yuval Steinitz, Maj.-Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror, Amb. Meir Rosenne,
Amb. Dore Gold

In a letter from President George W. Bush, dated April 14, 2004, the U.S. assured Israel that with respect to the disputed West Bank, Israel was entitled to defensible borders. This constituted the *quid pro quo* for Israel's Gaza pullout. The territorial, legal, and policy implications of this critical U.S. guarantee are fully examined in this study.

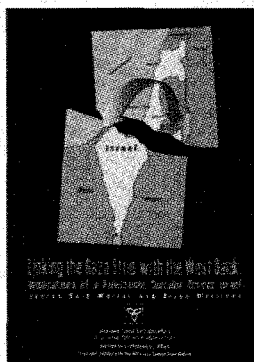


Referral of Iranian President Ahmadinejad on the Charge of Incitement to Commit Genocide

Justus Reid Weiner, with Amb. Meir Rosenne, Elie Wiesel,
Amb. Dore Gold, Irit Kohn, Amb. Eytan Bentsur, and MK Dan Naveh

An international legal team has determined that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran is violating the anti-incitement clause of the 1948 Genocide Convention, which calls for the prevention of genocide and not just the punishment of those who perpetrated the act after it is over.

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Halting Iran's Nuclear Weapons Program: Iranian Vulnerabilities and Western Policy Options

Brig. Gen. (Res.) Yossi Kuperwasser

Roughly half of Iran's government revenues stem from the export of crude oil, the production of which will continue to decline without substantial foreign investment. The U.S. and its Western allies have real economic leverage that must be more fully exploited.

Linking Gaza with the West Bank: Implications of a Palestinian Corridor Across Israel

Justus Reid Weiner and Diane Morrison

Israel is not required to accede to a territorial link between the West Bank and Gaza which would be in derogation of Israeli sovereignty. No such links were instituted in the cases of Angola, Argentina, Brunei, East Timor, and Oman which have geographically separated areas. Those insisting that a viable Palestinian state must provide for contiguity between the West Bank and Gaza cannot make their argument on solid legal grounds.

themselves as a burden, not a gift. Finally, because of the Jews' particularity, Jerusalem must forever remain in their possession ["Jerusalem: The Scandal of Particularity," July-August].

I might remind Mr. Podhoretz that the idea of chosenness has historically been the source of much trouble in the world. Today, suicide bombers and fundamentalists of all kinds no doubt consider themselves chosen. And our own local version of chosenness, what some call "American exceptionalism," has led to hubristic blunders like the war in Iraq. As for chosenness being a burden, that notion, too has a dubious legacy in the "white man's burden" that was invoked to rationalize colonialism in Africa and Asia.

Jerusalem, which is regarded by Jews, Muslims, and Christians as a holy city, might one day be properly considered for international status. Demographics, in any case, will play a large role in determining the city's future, especially as its Arab population continues to grow. For Jerusalem to remain the undivided capital of the Jewish state, as Mr. Podhoretz insists it must, will necessarily involve undemocratic practices, ethnic cleansing, or a Berlin Wall-like blight cutting through the city.

GARR CUTLER
Eugene, Oregon

TO THE EDITOR:

I read Norman Podhoretz's article on Jerusalem with great interest. His argument that Jerusalem should remain the undivided capital of Israel is characteristically trenchant, and his courage in challenging the arguments of lifelong friends like Hillel Halkin

and Walter Laqueur is admirable. But I differ with him about the grounds on which his own position should be justified. It is not just that the "hopes of peace" between Israel and the Palestinians "are illusory" at present. Nor need the Jews' "scandalous particularity," as symbolized by Jerusalem, be invoked. Universal values alone justify Israel's holding on to the city.

The capital of a nation represents its sovereignty. To ask of Israel to permit two capitals—West Jerusalem for the Jewish people and East Jerusalem for the Palestinian people—is to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the Jewish state, as well as to intensify the prospect for armed struggle between the two peoples. The bifurcation of Jerusalem along ethnic and religious lines would be no more reasonable than the separation of Washington, D.C. along the geographic curve of a white Northwest and an African-American Southeast.

IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ
New Brunswick, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

In arguing that Jerusalem should remain unified under Israeli sovereignty, Norman Podhoretz rests his case on the idea of Jewish "chosenness." This is a strange tack for him to take, given how troubling that idea is to many people. The argument for an undivided Jerusalem that is more likely to be acceptable to non-Jews is that there can be no better, more responsible caretaker for the holy city than Israel.

In Gaza, the Palestinians have shown a total inability to govern themselves, much less to show basic consideration for the needs of oth-

ers. The United Nations has time and time again revealed itself to be an ineffective peacekeeping force. Israel is the one party that can truly govern Jerusalem in a way that, while not perfect, is nonetheless beneficial to all its residents. The past 40 years of Israel's stewardship have been years of unprecedented development not only for the city as a whole but for the Jewish and Arab communities in it alike. This, combined with the city's rich Jewish heritage, should be justification enough to any objective outsider for Jerusalem to remain united under Israeli rule.

SHALOM FREEDMAN
Jerusalem, Israel

NORMAN PODHORETZ
writes:

Garr Cutler simply repeats what I wrote about the discomfort with, or outright hostility to, the idea of chosenness felt by many liberal Jews—and most, if not all, of their non-Jewish counterparts. Moreover, his brief for their attitude rests on blithely blaming the doctrine of chosenness for a number of phenomena he considers evil, none of which bears any relation to the biblical concept or how it has been interpreted by Jews throughout the centuries.

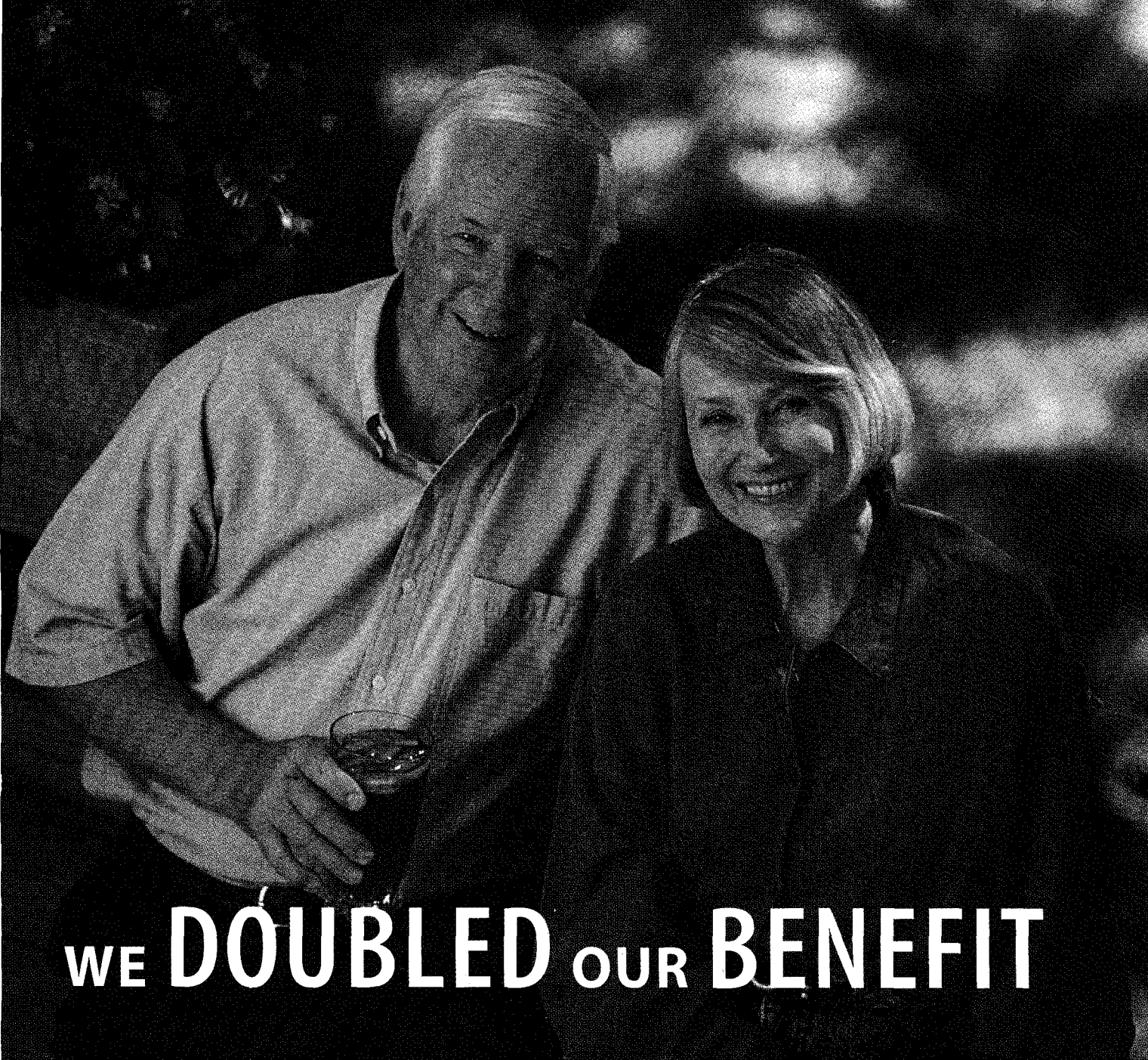
The idea of "American exceptionalism," for example, had nothing to do one way or the other with chosenness. According to the late Seymour Martin Lipset, perhaps the leading authority on the subject, "the major question subsumed in the concept became why the United States was the only industrialized country which did not have a significant socialist movement or Labor party." Thus, "Ameri-

can exceptionalism" had even less to do with the invasion of Iraq—which, incidentally, some of us regard not as a "hubristic blunder" but as a noble and strategically sound undertaking.

Does this mean that we think we are shouldering what Kipling, in the poem he wrote in 1899 about the American takeover of the Philippines, called the "White Man's Burden"? If so, we are making a great mistake, since it is not we but the opponents of what the United States is trying to do in Iraq who will find their views supported by Kipling's poem. For the message of "The White Man's Burden" was that the American effort to bring freedom and prosperity to the Philippines was doomed to fail:

Take up the White
Man's burden—
The savage wars of
peace—
Fill full the mouth of
Famine
And bid the sickness
cease;
And when your goal is
nearest
The end for others
sought,
Watch sloth and
heathen Folly
Bring all your hopes
to nought.

In any case, the burden that chosenness imposed on the Israelites of the Hebrew Bible and their descendants was their *own* need to obey the Law, not—as in Islam—to spread their faith to others by the sword. Which brings me to Mr. Cutler's inclusion of suicide bombers on his list of the evils that he imagines have flowed from the doctrine of chosenness. If, as he says, the Islamofascist suicide bombers "con-



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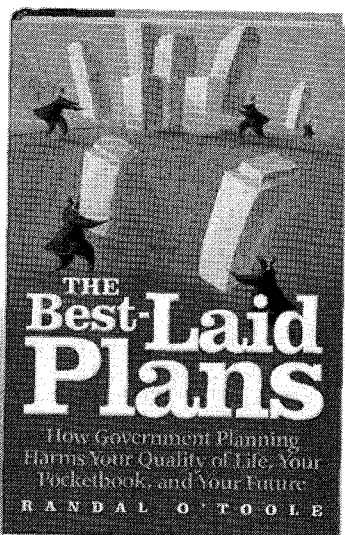
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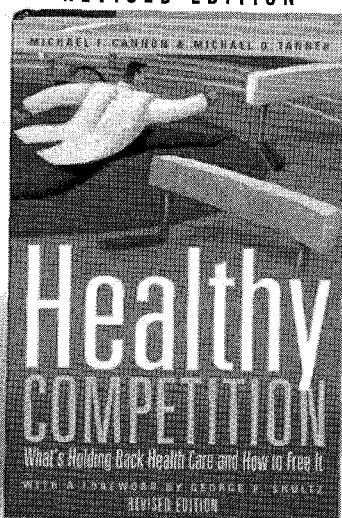
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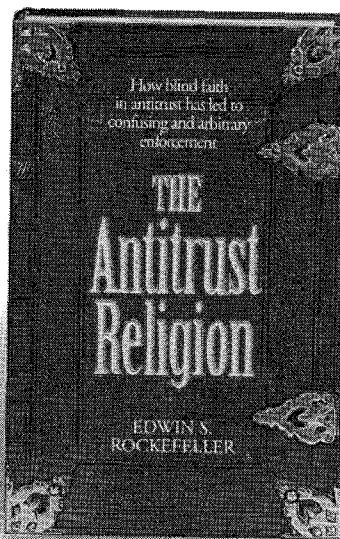
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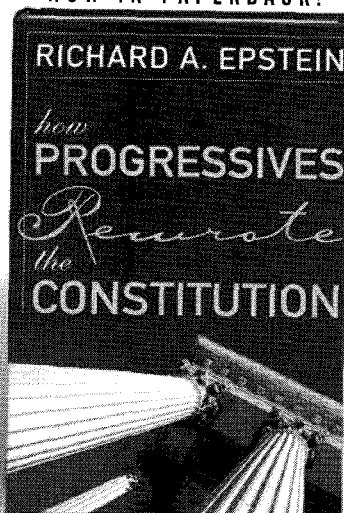
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sider themselves chosen,” then what they are chosen for, obviously, is death.

Here, by contrast, is what the Israelites are told by God in Deuteronomy: “I have set before you life and death . . . therefore choose life.” God goes on to identify life with obedience to the Law whose observance was entailed by His choice of this people as the mysterious instrumentality through which it would at the end of days be accepted by all mankind—again, voluntarily, and not by the sword. In the meantime, as the Israelites were further instructed in the meaning of chosenness by the prophet Amos speaking in the name of God: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”

Both Irving Louis Horowitz and Shalom Freedman seem to be under the impression that I was offering the idea of chosenness as a rationale for keeping Jerusalem united. But what I was actually doing was using it to back up my prediction that Israel would survive the determination of its enemies to wipe it off the map, and that a united Jerusalem would remain its capital. The arguments Mr. Horowitz and Mr. Freedman offer in the service of helping that prediction to come true are certainly sound, and they also demonstrate why Mr. Cutler’s proposal to internationalize Jerusalem lies moldering in the mass grave in which the many “peace plans” incorporating it have ignominiously been buried.

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Intelligence

TO THE EDITOR:

I commend Gabriel Schoenfeld for "The CIA Follies (Cont'd.)" [July-August], an insightful critique of the organization in which I spent seventeen years as a political-military analyst.

Mr. Schoenfeld rightly observes, from his reading of George Tenet's *At the Center of the Storm*, that the recently retired Director of Central Intelligence is "no student of history." Tenet's scholarly and analytical shortcomings come into even sharper focus when his book is placed beside *From the Shadows*, the CIA memoir of Robert Gates, another former CIA director and now our Secretary of Defense. Gates's book sheds much light on the role of intelligence in history and policymaking, while Tenet reveals himself to have been

essentially a bureaucratic tactician. Surely this says something about the quality of our intelligence in the last decade.

Regrettably, the leadership rungs of the intelligence community have been increasingly occupied by military officers, and less by civilian scholars like Gates. Advocates for the creation of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) office once argued that the post was desperately needed, in part, to shore up civilian influence in the intelligence community. But the majority of the intelligence community's \$40-billion budget remains controlled by the Pentagon, and the major intelligence agencies—DNI, CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Agency—are all led by retired or active-duty general officers.

There is no gainsaying

our highly capable general-officer corps, but when retired and especially active-duty officers stack the leadership rungs of the intelligence community, we run higher risks of intelligence being overly influenced and tainted by military and operational factors. This is not a healthy practice in a democracy.

RICHARD RUSSELL
*National Defense University
Washington, D.C.*

GABRIEL SCHOENFELD
writes:

In the aftermath of September 11, the CIA is doing some things better than it did in the past, and doing a great many things with a sense of tremendous urgency. But fixing the agency, as I attempted to show in my analysis of the George Tenet years, remains a critical task.

How to proceed? Richard Russell, whom I thank for his generous words about my article, touches on the composition of the agency staff and leadership and raises the question of what is the right balance between civilian scholars in the Robert Gates mold and military men in the (General) Michael Hayden and (Vice-Admiral) Michael McConnell mold. It is of course impossible to say which is better. Both civilian and military men have their professional strengths and professional deformations. What is clear is that the agency has a pressing need for risk-takers and unorthodox thinkers. What it does not need is more of the second-rate bureaucrats and careerists who rose to the fore in the years before September 11.

What it also does not need is self-deception and



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complacency about its seemingly intractable internal weaknesses. In a September letter marking the CIA's 60th anniversary, McConnell hailed the agency staff for the "world-class operations" it conducts, the "best-in-class technology and services" it provides, the "brilliant analysis and reporting" it produces, and its all-around "tremendous work." This extravagant self-praise, coming on the heels of two of the most spectacular and costly intelligence lapses in the CIA's history, was undoubtedly intended as a morale booster. But we should not kid ourselves into thinking that these words reflect reality. Rebuilding a capable intelligence service is a process that will take decades, and we do not have decades to deal with the dangers that have already unfolded before us.

Americanism

TO THE EDITOR:

In discussing what an American creed might consist of, Terry Teachout sets up a false dichotomy ["Our Creed and Our Character," July-August]. On the one hand, he suggests, we can embrace the worldview of

secular intellectuals who are troubled by the idea of a religion-based "Americanism" and the desire among its adherents to shape the world in our own image. On the other hand, we can embrace the idea that we are God's chosen people, and live up to our world-historical task. (He prefers the latter.)

Ignored by Mr. Teachout is a third approach, by which America's religious heritage itself makes us dubious about playing an imperial role in the world. This is given best expression in the writings of the liberal theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, who took seriously the idea of original sin and the human propensity toward evil and how they could pervert even our most well-intentioned efforts in the world. In political terms, such a creed promotes sobriety and restraint instead of utopian day-dreaming.

GARY PANETTA

Peoria, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to add a historical footnote to Terry Teachout's discussion of David Gelernter's *Americanism* in "Our Creed and Our Character." Mr. Teachout cites Gelernter's view that "the very survival of America" depends on the American people's contin-

ued embrace of a biblically-inspired faith in liberty, democracy, and America's calling to spread them throughout the world. For Gelernter, the watchword of this creed is that of the Psalmist: "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

When John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas in 1963, he was on his way to a joint luncheon of two local organizations (the Dallas Citizens Council and the Dallas Assembly) that symbolized progressive liberal leadership in the city. Gelernter cites the final sentence of the speech that Kennedy was to have delivered there, but the entire last paragraph is worth quoting:

We in this country, in this generation, are—by destiny rather than choice—the watchmen on the walls of world freedom. We ask, therefore, that we may be worthy of our power and responsibility, that we may exercise our strength with wisdom and restraint, and that we may achieve in our time and for all time the ancient vision of "peace on earth, good will toward men." That must always be our goal, and the righteousness of our cause must always underlie our strength. For

as was written long ago: "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

The image of the "watchman" in the first sentence is drawn from Isaiah, and the final sentence of course recalls Gelernter's Psalm 127.

This was apparently a time when a Democratic President could urge the country to "bear any burden" and "oppose any foe" in the service of a righteous cause in the world, and allude repeatedly to the Bible, without defensiveness or ostentation, in an address to a progressive group.

RICK RICHMAN

Los Angeles, California

TERRY TEACHOUT writes:

Gary Panetta is confusing me with David Gelernter. I did not express a *personal* preference for Gelernter's approach; I merely praised the "corrective value" of his sacralized reading of American history (which is hardly reducible to Mr. Panetta's pejorative summary of it) and suggested that it was more closely in accord with the American national character than a purely secular interpretation of our collective self-understanding.

My thanks to Rick Richman for his letter and the full JFK quotation.

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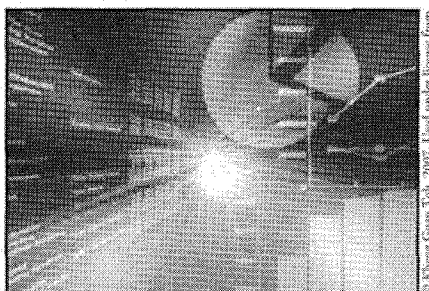
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What Kind of War Are We Fighting, and Can We Win It?

A Symposium

To mark the publication of Norman Podhoretz's World War IV: The Long Struggle Against Islamofascism (Doubleday), the editors of COMMENTARY addressed the following questions to a group of leading thinkers:

1. Do you accept the term "World War IV," or the idea behind it, as an apt characterization of the West's battle with Islamic extremism, and do you, like Norman Podhoretz, see Iraq as a crucial early theater in that conflict?
2. Six years after 9/11, how would you assess our progress? What would you like to see happen next?
3. On the specific issue of the spread of democracy—a linchpin of the Bush Doctrine and a point of acute controversy between foreign-policy realists and neoconservatives—do you agree or disagree with Podhoretz that "democratization represents the best and perhaps even the only way to defeat Islamofascism and the terrorism it uses as its main weapon against us"?
4. Turning to the political climate at home, do you think the Bush Doctrine has a chance of surviving the elections of 2008, and if so in what form?

The responses, fifteen in all, appear below in alphabetical order.

This symposium is sponsored by the EDWIN MORRIS GALE MEMORIAL FUND.

Fouad Ajami

NORMAN PODHORETZ's depiction of the war against Islamist radicalism as World War IV is apt. I have no quarrel with the description: I take it as pedagogy and exhortation and a call to vigilance. The radical Islamists have been sly enemies of order; they have flown under the radar, as it were. Theirs is more, much more, than a problem

of freelance terror, to be met by police operations. They have declared nothing less than an unrelenting war against the American presence in the Arab-Islamic world, and they should be taken for the menace they are.

The region they contest—the Arab and Persian heartland of the Islamic world—cannot be ceded to them, for its obvious importance to the global economy. A challenge of this magnitude has to be

thoroughly defeated. It is commonplace—but “soft” in the main—to say that this is a war of ideas for the hearts and minds of the populations of that region. What happens on the battlefield will settle this great contest. Hearts and minds will follow, and mirror, the military outcome.

The origins and legitimacy of the Iraq war have been endlessly debated. For me, it is and remains a just and noble war, waged by an American leader who was fated to take on the troubles and malignancies of the Arab-Islamic world. The distinction between the Islamism of al Qaeda and the “secularism” of the Iraqi regime is a distinction without a difference. A road led from Kabul to Baghdad. We took the war from the Afghan front, which the Arab preachers and financiers and jihadists had secured as a base for their operations, to the Arab world itself. In Baghdad, a despot at once cruel and (fortunately) clumsy held out to the Arabs an example of defiance, proof that no price would be paid by those who took on American power. Once we pulled the trigger in 2003, Iraq became the central front in the war on terror. Fail there, and our enemies would have been emboldened beyond measure, and the world would have depicted our failure as evidence that history’s tide was running against us.

We have paid dearly in Iraq, but we held the line, we maintained the American position in the region, we supplied proof that we would not scurry for cover and that we believed there were things worth fighting for. The despots in the region feigned a lack of interest in the fate of Saddam’s brutal sons, and in Saddam’s execution. But make no mistake: these personalistic regimes got the message. There but for the grace of God, they thought, go we. The sacrifices in Iraq paid dividends in Iraq’s neighborhood.

WE HAVE DONE reasonably well since 9/11. American memory is unduly short, and the memory of 9/11 is steadily being lost to us. There is a growing conviction that this was a single day of grief, that the warrant given to our government back then by the most liberal of the liberals should now be withdrawn. The vigilance our country sanctioned after 9/11 is now seen as overly intrusive and given to paranoia. But we take the world as it is, and at least some of the illusions held about Arab and Muslim affairs, about the sources and wellsprings of anti-Americanism, have been shed.

I would very much want to see a more critical assessment of the role of Egypt and of Egyptians in the trail that led to 9/11. Here is a country on the

American payroll, a regime in the orbit of American power. But Egypt’s ruler has snookered us all along. He takes America’s coin but rides with its enemies. He has winked at, and fed, a culture suffused with anti-modernism and anti-Americanism—and anti-Semitism, their inevitable companion. The prestige of Egypt in Arab affairs is great, and so is the influence of its radicalism.

Those in the know—and those who pretend to be—have written and spoken about the influence exercised by the Egyptian thinker and pamphleteer Sayyid Qutb (executed by the Nasser regime in 1966) on the course of modern Islamism. This is good as far as it goes. What is needed is a more sustained analysis of the depth of Egyptian radicalism, and of the skill of that despotic regime in directing the wrath of its own thwarted population toward the United States. Beyond this lies the need for a proper response to the Hosni Mubarak regime. We need to cast that regime adrift.

But grant George W. Bush his due: he broke with Scowcroftian realism, he broke with the likes of James Baker. His speech of November 6, 2003, to the National Endowment for Democracy will remain, for decades, a noble American declaration. It had a startling *mea culpa*:

Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe—because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty. As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place for stagnation, resentment, and violence for export.

It was this declaration, and the larger Bush campaign for democracy, that gave heart to the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon, which rid that country of a long and cruel Syrian captivity; it was this drive that gave continued justification to the Iraq war after the hunt for weapons of mass destruction there ran aground. The historical truth of Bush’s declaration is indisputable. The Bush Doctrine brought about a veritable reversal in the realm of ideas: here was a conservative President asserting that freedom can travel to distant shores, that we can take it to strangers beyond, and here were his liberal critics at home falling back on a surly argument that Iraq, Lebanon, and other Arab and Islamic domains offer insurmountable obstacles to the spread of freedom.

Natan Sharansky is perhaps on the mark with his observation that Bush, in holding onto his belief, is a lonely man even within his own circle of power.

To come to that belief, Bush needed no great literacy in political theory. Intuitively, he grasped the connection between autocracy and terror. Norman Podhoretz's argument on behalf of liberty reads that landscape with clarity. The peace of pharaohs and autocrats, the stability presented by despotism, is deceptive. The politics of democracy can be messy, of new democracies messier still. But we ought to have the courage of running freedom's risks.

Yes, a poisoned Palestinian political culture opted for Hamas in a free election in early 2006. This is what it is: an expression of the malady of Palestinian politics. The larger case for democratic reform is bigger, and nobler, than the state of Palestinian politics. Travel to Iraq, as I have done repeatedly since 2003; go to Kurdistan, which had seen endless sorrow. Faith in democracy is all these populations have going for them, their solace and their pride.

What shall stick on the ground here at home of Bush's campaign for freedom? Hard to say. The peerless Henry Kissinger, in *Diplomacy* (1994), writes of the great paradox of Woodrow Wilson and his enduring influence on American thought. Wilson's program for the League of Nations was rebuffed, his dream of collective security was set aside. But oddly, Wilsonianism triumphed. "For three generations," Kissinger writes, "critics have savaged Wilson's analysis and conclusions; and yet, in all this time, Wilson's principles have remained the bedrock of American foreign-policy thinking."

Whether a similar fate awaits Bush's diplomacy of freedom cannot be known as yet. I suppose it will be in Iraq, a hard and tough soil, where the proposition on behalf of freedom will meet its test. But Bush rolled history's dice. He held out to the Arabs a respectful message: that despotism was not necessarily something fated— "written"—for them for all time.

FOUAD AJAMI is director of Middle East Studies at the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, and the author most recently of *The Foreigner's Gift: The Americans, the Arabs, and the Iraqis in Iraq* (Free Press). Mr. Ajami was awarded a Prize for Outstanding Achievement by the Bradley Foundation in 2006.

John R. Bolton

NORMAN PODHORETZ correctly and concisely names the war we have been in, consciously or not, since well before September 11, 2001. He accurately depicts the failures of many in America and Europe to understand the nature of the Islamofascist threat, let alone formulate strategies to deal with it. He identifies the terrorist threat posed in Iraq, and places it in the larger context of what will unquestionably be a "long, hard slog."

Well and good, but let's cut to the chase: what does any of this have to do with promoting democracy? My response: in the short run, very little, and in the longer run, who knows?

First, I think our emphasis must be more on liberty than democracy, which a careful reading of President Bush's speeches shows is *his* real emphasis. To state the obvious, liberty is not the same as democracy, the first being freedom from government, the second being one way to select governments. Many Muslim societies—and many non-Muslim societies, while we are on the subject—need the former more urgently than the latter.

Second, "democracy" is a word used so frequently and so ritualistically that, like many incantations, it loses meaning over time. Parliamentary democracies, for example, merge executive and legislative powers in the hands of one electoral majority, something the framers of our Constitution rejected as dangerous to liberty. Moreover, proportional-representation systems, especially those with national party lists, are not as reflective of electorates as are single-member districts.

Is Europe, where these approaches predominate, as "democratic" as the United States? I think not. Moreover, democracy is not necessarily an end point in politics, but perhaps only a way station. Via the European Union, "Europe" may be passing from a pre-democratic feudal society to a post-democratic bureaucratic one, parts of the continent having sojourned only relatively briefly as actual democracies. Russia may be a place where democracy was a long time in coming but only a short time in going. China, home of the original Mandarins, may never get there. These are hardly models for the Middle East or other Muslim lands.

Third, how feasible is "democracy" right now? Writing in COMMENTARY in November 1979, Jeane Kirkpatrick rebuked the foreign-policy initiatives of the Carter administration by citing John Stuart Mill's conditions for representative government:

One, that the people should be willing to receive it; two, that they should be willing and able to do what is necessary for its preservation; three, that they should be willing and able to fulfill the duties and discharge the functions which it imposes on them.

And Kirkpatrick went on to observe:

In the relatively few places where they exist, democratic governments have come into being slowly, after extended prior experience with more limited forms of participation during which leaders have reluctantly grown accustomed to tolerating dissent and opposition, opponents have accepted the notion that they may defeat but not destroy incumbents, and people have become aware of government's effects on their lives and of their own possible effects on government. Decades, if not centuries, are normally required for people to acquire the necessary disciplines and habits.

FOURTH, HAVING a Burkean disposition, I shy away from abstract theory. Take three specific cases: Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan.

Iraq does not appear to measure up to the Mill-Kirkpatrick standard. Its Shiites and Kurds are settling scores, retaliating for decades of brutal Baathist rule. Sunnis, acutely aware of their minority status, are engaging in terrorism precisely to prevent scores from being settled. Meanwhile, Shiites are fighting their own internecine terrorist battles, facilitated by Iran.

Once again, Kirkpatrick called the shot: "leaders of all major sectors of the society must agree to pursue power only by legal means, must eschew (at least in principle) violence, theft, and fraud, and must accept defeat when necessary." Doesn't sound like Baghdad.

My solution in Iraq is prosaic: praise democracy, but pass the ammunition. Critics of the Bush Doctrine, unjustifiably, will gauge its success almost entirely according to the outcome in Iraq. To preserve the doctrine beyond January 19, 2009, American interests require that no part of Iraq become a base for terrorism. If that can be done with a democratic Iraq, wonderful; if it has to be done with less than Jeffersonian purity, fine.

Next, Iran's vigorous pursuit of deliverable nuclear weapons is a grave long-term threat to the United States, Israel, and our worldwide interests. Four-plus years of American deference to Europe's predilection for negotiation has brought Iran that much closer to its goal, and yielded precious few options to prevent it. Of these, unfortunately, only

regime change in Tehran or the use of force against Iran's nuclear program has any realistic prospect of success. Both are grim choices, to be sure. In these very pages, Norman Podhoretz has cogently argued for military action ("The Case for Bombing Iran," June 2007), eschewing the blossoming of democracy's flower children in favor of cold steel.

In Pakistan, finally, so far the only Islamic country with nuclear weapons, Pervez Musharraf's government is under siege by civilian politicians clamoring for a return to democracy. Pakistan's history is replete with corrupt and incompetent civilian politicians, replaced periodically by the military's "steel skeleton," but with neither experience yielding especially happy results. Musharraf is rightly faulted for many things, especially inadequately purging the army of Islamic militants and a listless pursuit of al Qaeda, but does anyone seriously argue that politicians will better harness Pakistan's military?

With a nuclear arsenal up for grabs, the stakes in Pakistan are high. Bolstered by the Bush administration's evident support, the politicians continue to try to force Musharraf out, which likely will be hailed as a triumph of democracy. That may be, but I am far from certain that elected civilians running Islamabad will make us safer from a loss of command-and-control over those nuclear weapons, or from the danger that they will come into terrorist hands. This is a risky way to experiment with democratic theory.

In prior world wars, we concentrated on victory first, not the purity of our allies. Similarly, I'd rather win World War IV distastefully than lose it for the sake of purity. I actually think Norman Podhoretz would agree.

JOHN R. BOLTON, *who served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations in 2005-2006, is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. His new book, Surrender Is Not an Option, is forthcoming this month from Simon & Schuster.*

Max Boot

BY PUBLISHING *World War IV*, Norman Podhoretz has performed yet another important public service, showing once again why he was such a worthy recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. At a time when our political leaders are

split over whether we are actually at war with terrorists, when opposition to the war effort in Iraq is growing, and when apathy and complacency appear to be settling in among the public, he lucidly and compellingly explains why we are fighting, how we can prevail, and why we must do so.

My major disagreement with him is pretty minor. It concerns what to call this conflict. Labeling it World War IV assumes that the cold war was World War III, but almost nobody calls it that. Maybe they should, but they don't. As a matter of purely historical accuracy, moreover, the cold war should be called World War V, since the first world war was really the Seven Years' War, known in North America as the French and Indian War, while the second was the Napoleonic War. If we follow this logic, we would relabel the 1914-18 conflict World War III and the 1939-45 conflict World War IV, in the same way that George Lucas relabeled his first *Star Wars* film "Episode IV" after producing three "prequels."

But merely to advance this argument is to reveal its impracticality. Accurate or not, certain terms enter widespread public usage and cannot be dislodged by argumentation, no matter how persuasive. Thus the conflict against Communism was called the cold war, not World War III, and the current conflict has been called the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) or the Long War. I am sympathetic to the objections to both those terms, but they have entered the lexicon, and for better or worse we're stuck with them.

In any case, there is a significant difference between World Wars I and II, on the one hand, and, on the other, the cold war and the GWOT. The former were relatively short bursts of highly concentrated violence in which the U.S. and its allies waged all-out war to defeat nation-states. The latter conflicts are longer and more amorphous. Sometimes they call for direct military action (e.g., the Korean and Vietnam wars, or the Afghanistan and Iraq wars) but more often they require the use of diplomacy, propaganda, intelligence, covert action, foreign military assistance, and other policy tools. And while we sometimes have to contend with nation-state foes, in many cases our enemies are semi-autonomous guerrilla groups or political organizations.

During the latter stages of the cold war, for instance, the U.S. had to deal with organized protests like the nuclear-freeze movement as well as with terrorist groups like the Red Brigades. Both had links to Moscow and its satellites, but were more than merely Russian puppets. Today, we face a wide variety of Islamofascist groups, many of which have

only the most tenuous connections with "al Qaeda Central."

The right way to defeat most of these groups is not to wage classic conventional conflict—as might be implied by the term World War IV—but instead to carry out a global counterinsurgency. This, like all successful counterinsurgencies, must be predominantly political, not military, in its focus.

How are we doing in that counterinsurgency six years after 9/11? By the most important measure—terrorist attacks in the United States—spectacularly well. By other measures, not so well: as a recent National Intelligence Estimate noted, al Qaeda Central has managed to reconstitute itself in Pakistan, and its affiliates around the world have continued to carry out vicious attacks.

Two of the most important fronts in this larger struggle are in Iraq and Afghanistan, and here again the situation is mixed. Afghanistan seems to be doing a bit better than Iraq, while Iraq seems to be doing a bit better than it was a year ago. But it is far too soon to know whether we will succeed in creating long-term stability and representative government in either country. In both cases, but especially in Iraq, our war effort has been marred by serious mistakes on the part of the Bush administration. Whether we can overcome those setbacks at this late date remains unclear, though I believe the "surge" in Iraq is making significant progress.

I AGREE with Norman Podhoretz that a commitment to democratization must remain a key American objective in the GWOT, and here again the progress report is mixed. I am more critical of the Bush administration than he is for not doing enough to live up to its soaring rhetoric about spreading freedom. In too many cases we are still dancing to the tune of dictators who insist "it's me or the mullahs" even as their own misrule actually strengthens the hand of the most radical agitators.

I admit that democracy promotion cannot be our only interest, and that we have to be careful about how we go about it. Nevertheless, I think there is more that the President could be doing to carry out his stated agenda. For a start, he should condition further aid to Egypt on the release from prison of the liberal opposition leader Ayman Nour.

For all its problems of implementation, I believe the Bush Doctrine will outlive this administration. Its two central tenets—promoting democracy and taking preemptive action when necessary—are not terribly controversial in the abstract even if one particular application, in Iraq, has become very controversial indeed. None of the major Demo-

cratic or Republican presidential contenders is pledging to eschew either one of these ideas. And that is not surprising, because both were a feature of American foreign policy long before George W. Bush was born. The Bush "revolution" primarily consists of elevating their importance rhetorically if not always in practice. (Note that we have not waged any preemptive wars since the invasion of Iraq, and that our support for democracy has become very attenuated in the second Bush term.)

Future Presidents may tone down the rhetoric, but they will still feel compelled to act preemptively against terrorists and in favor of democracy. At least sometimes. But then, as Norman Podhoretz also observes, no President, not even this one, is ever a model of consistency, and any "doctrine" inevitably simplifies the messy reality of policy implementation.

MAX BOOT is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, a contributor to COMMENTARY's blog contentions, and the author of War Made New: Weapons, Warriors, and the Making of the Modern World (Gotham).

Reuel Marc Gerecht

IF ONE SEES the world as Islamic radicals do, Islam as a faith and as a civilization is locked in a brutal struggle with the West—usually described as a baleful place of aggressive Christians and Jews, or a seductive, immoral realm of atheists (who formerly were aggressive Christians and Jews). Where once this collision was confined primarily to the Middle East, today Islamic radicals regularly concern themselves with the situation, demands, and God-given rights of large Muslim communities living in the West itself. In the last 40 years, Islam has become a truly global faith—something that was not the case when the Egyptian Islamist Sayyid Qutb, one of the most influential modern radicals, was in his prime in the 1950's, or even when Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini joined the ranks of the most successful modern militants.

It is certainly fair to define one's enemies and their battles as they themselves do. Historians, diplomats, spies, and journalists who fail to do this often commit the sin of mirror-imaging—a common problem for secularized Westerners looking at the Muslim Middle East. So on these grounds it

is hard to disagree with Norman Podhoretz's use of the phrase World War IV to describe the violent onslaught of Islamic holy warriors against the West, and in particular against the United States, its cutting edge.

Nevertheless, I am uncomfortable with the appellation. My objection is both philosophical and mundane: it gives too much coherence to the enemy, and sociologically and geographically it leaves me frustrated.

ISLAMIC RADICALISM is still a leaderless tempest: the birth of al Qaeda was an attempt to give organization and charismatic inspiration to a movement that was easy to locate (find a Saudi-funded mosque, and you can usually find the component parts) but difficult to define consistently. Islamic extremism's greatest growth spurt in the 20th century occurred after Saudi Arabia, spooked by Khomeini's Islamic revolution, met Iranian proselytizing head-on. Absent this clash, which occurred concurrently with Osama bin Laden's efforts to rouse devout but often uninterested Muslims to war against the Soviets in Afghanistan, Sunni extremism would not be so globally developed today.

The United States was by no means incidental to that clash: at the mosque level, both sides gained adherents by preaching hostility to America. But this common hatred is messy and tense. Radical Iranian commentary on al Qaeda, for example, is a hodge-podge of envy, admiration, and disgust. For all Muslim holy warriors, modernity is the cause of the ethical freefall that in turn allows them to regard the slaughter of women and children as permissible. Nevertheless, these men are also at war with the vast majority of Muslims, who, regardless of their attitude toward the United States, are considered moral backsliders eagerly consuming the worst, if not the best, of the Western world.

Side by side with Sunni and Shiite holy warriors there exist fundamentalists who similarly loathe the United States and want to extirpate much of Western culture from their societies—but who are not themselves active participants in a jihad against America. In common with many liberal Arabs and (for that matter) European intellectuals, they may have experienced a gleeful *frisson* when the Twin Towers fell; and they would certainly prefer it if their governments limited their military and intelligence dealings with the United States. But, while knowing the risks of contamination, they might also well choose to send their children for higher education in the United States. (Iran's Islamic revolution was born of this contradiction.)

Either voluntarily or under police pressure, devout Muslims like these have been critical to the efforts of Sunni regimes to monitor, corral, and kill violent extremists. In Shiite Iran, clerics and intellectuals who are not really enemies of the regime are at the same time capable of making trenchant, devastating critiques of the ruling mullahs. No American should want to entrust a nuclear weapon to any of these people, but they are more at odds with the clerical regime than they are with the United States.

I do not feel enough of this nuance, contradiction, and internal Muslim turbulence in *World War IV*. Yes, the United States must defend itself militarily against those Muslims who define their identity inextricably through violent hatred of the West. But characterizing this necessary self-defense as a world war is too unwieldy, too brusque, and too easily abused by Muslims and Westerners who *really* want to see a more developed clash of civilizations.

Is IRAQ pivotal to the war against Islamic extremism? Absolutely. Al Qaeda now describes the ongoing struggle there in more momentous terms than those formerly used by bin Laden to describe the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The view of clerical Iran is not much different. Both parties intend to radicalize Iraq's Shiites: to create a Hizballah in Mesopotamia. It is difficult to foresee these dueling radicalisms exhausting each other to America's advantage.

Rating the Bush administration's progress likewise depends on Iraq. If the administration fails there, then we will have greatly strengthened the forces of radical Islam. By comparison, Bill Clinton, who failed altogether to rise to the challenge of bin Laden, could look very good.

Is democracy the answer to this extremism? Probably yes. Even thoughtful arguments to the contrary, such as those advanced by Martin Kramer, take us back to an embrace of Muslim dictatorships in the hope that under these "stable" regimes, Islamic radicalism will die out. That is possible. But I think Islamic history teaches the opposite. We have been waiting for decades for the Middle East's autocracies to permit, à la Atatürk, the emergence of the building blocks of freer societies. Instead, most of these oligarchies have gotten worse.

"Muslims as a community cannot agree upon an error" is an old Sunni dictum waiting to be tested in the democratic arena. Muslim democracy is not likely to be pretty or particularly liberal. But it offers a chance to imbue popular will with a divine sanction, and a chance for Muslims to deracinate

the holy warriors from their communities. It is hard to see anything more than continuing stagnation emerging from the Mubaraks, the ben Alis, the Assads, the Sauds, or even the Hashemites.

REUEL MARC GERECHT is a resident fellow of the American Enterprise Institute, a contributing editor of the *Weekly Standard*, and the author of *The Islamic Paradox: Shiite Clerics, Sunni Fundamentalists, and the Coming of Arab Democracy* (2004).

Victor Davis Hanson

I DO ACCEPT the term World War IV, as well as the idea behind it, and here is why I think Norman Podhoretz is right. We are in a long, terrible war with an Islamic fascist ideology that embodies an expansionist, authoritarian creed of religious hatred, anti-Semitism, and reactionary mythology. Fighting, albeit on a sub-state level and against relatively small numbers of combatants, transcends borders, with various fronts even outside the Middle East. Worldwide, Islamists feed on both stealthy state sanction and occasional tacit approval from an aggrieved Muslim "street." And the tenets of jihadism—best found in the rantings of Ayman al-Zawahiri and reified by the operations of bin Laden's al Qaeda—are no more disjointed than were the World War II anti-American creeds cobbled together by the various German, Italian, and Japanese militarists.

This present war, brutal though it is, is in military terms not as ghastly as past global wars that cost tens of thousands of American lives. (At least that is the case so far, without the terrorists' acquisition of nuclear devices.) But politically it is far harder to conduct because of international dependence on an oil-rich tribal Middle East, the influence of instantaneous global communications, and the therapeutic ethos of our own postmodern society. Another obvious difference from past global wars is that belligerents like Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, all of which are involved in funding or aiding the main perpetrators, have denied culpability. Their insidious wink-and-nod diplomacy is aimed at codifying the idea of "stateless terrorists"—and, thus, the corollary idea that we cannot respond with conventional force to national practitioners or enablers of Islamic terror.

Still, this *is* a wholesale war against the idea of America, both in the real and metaphorical sense, conducted both through violent and non-violent means against us and our friends from Manhattan and London to Beirut and Anbar. The Islamists, like past ideological foes, are existential enemies who do indeed hate the contradictions and destabilization brought to traditional life by Western-inspired modernization. They also thirst to bring us down, empowered both by their alleged military victory over the Soviets in Afghanistan and by the long-term laxity of the West.

Iraqi democracy is an anathema to Islamists, and so Iraq is the crucial front that, magnet-like, draws in terrorists from far and wide. To suppose otherwise is to believe that we simply create terrorists *ex nihilo* who then flock to Iraq on the news we are there—and will leave and go home if only we would depart. But most will not leave unless and until they are driven out, and besides, their brothers are already ubiquitous and deadly in places where we have no real presence, landscapes as varied as Lebanon, Sudan, and Somalia, not to mention Europe.

PROGRESS: the two worst regimes in the Middle East are gone. In Afghanistan and Iraq, the war has shifted to a political/military struggle to stabilize reform governments. Most of the al-Qaeda leadership that started the war is either dead, scattered, or in custody, and bin Laden, supposedly still a magnetic Saladin, dares not leave his cave in Waziristan. More to the point, a recent Pew poll revealed that his popularity is falling in the Middle East, and with it overall support for the tactic of suicide bombing.

Recent changes in European governments and immigration policy, and security measures here at home, have created a Western climate much more inimical to radical Islam than before. Our counter-efforts bear fruit. It simply is harder now—though far from impossible—to pull off an attack of a 9/11 magnitude. Majority-party congressional Democrats may damn Guantanamo, wiretaps, and the Patriot Act, but they still have enough political savvy to do little if anything to repeal such successful instruments of deterrence.

On the downside, and on the ideological front, the jihadists have shown an uncanny ability to recycle or repackage old multiculturalist slurs against Western capitalist democracy, while we too often assert rather than explain why and how we do what we do. In the meantime, still thriving at home are the more outrageous conspiracy theories. The fraud

of Michael Moore, the bile of Patrick J. Buchanan, do take a toll; a Bill Maher, a MoveOn.org General “Betray Us” ad, or a Rosy O’Donnell lowers the bar of the shameful, and so too does the mainstream media’s standard narrative of Iraq as all IED’s and suicide belts. Vietnam aside, I cannot think of any prior war in which our soldiers have been compared with the likes of Nazis, Stalinists, and other mass murderers by senior members of Congress, or pronouncements *in mediis rebus* by a Senate majority leader that the war is “lost.” Our country is confused and angry, and we are not sure of the morrow.

As is usual in wars, the battlefield will adjudicate things better than those who offer mere opinions. If General David Petraeus stabilizes Iraq enough to allow reconciliation to proceed, then the world will start making the necessary political adjustments in our favor; if he should not, then catastrophe looms.

What next? Immediately there should be more urgent international efforts to isolate Iran entirely, and financially to squeeze that regime by boycotts, embargos, and blockades if its nuclear program continues as envisioned. But the key right now remains Iraq. We must remember that neither the Iranian nor the Syrian regime could spread terror, or perhaps even long endure, once truly reformed governments are in place in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Lebanon. In particular, the Iraqis’ success spells their failure.

I ADMIRE Norman Podhoretz for using the much-caricatured term “democratization.” Critics seek to equate this with some sort of naïve embrace of mere plebiscites, rather than an evolutionary process toward the entire framework of constitutional government, from independent judiciaries to human-rights guarantees and freedom of expression. In any case, are we to believe that, because the terrorists of Hamas were elected in Gaza, our efforts at stabilizing the Iraqi reform government or prodding Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak have thereby been refuted?

Advocacy of political reform offers choices other than dictatorship and theocracy. Despite the slander against it by opponents of the Bush Doctrine, promotion of democracy remains the best way to address the contradictions of fundamentalist tribal cultures that suddenly have trillions of petrodollars at their disposal to fund anti-Western terrorists. In the meantime, and along the way, a program to reduce the world price of oil through conservation, alternate energies, and increased petroleum production is now a matter not just of free-market economics but of national survival.

As for whether the Bush Doctrine will survive, in the short term I fear not. Today's Democrats, like so many old-fashioned right-wing isolationists, appear to regard the Iraqis as unworthy of American sacrifice, and the brave emergence of Iraqi voters and reformers as signifying no more than tribal or mob rule. How odd that our pessimistic Left seems rather to have resigned itself to the ultimate triumph of the often cowardly Islamists than mobilized to help the Iraqis who bravely fight them.

For their part, the Republican presidential candidates concentrate mainly on not "losing" Iraq. Most (but not all) would seem to welcome some undefined secular, perhaps authoritarian order that would at least allow us to leave *something* firm behind. But otherwise, on the Right as on the Left, advocating consensual government abroad now seems to be considered equivalent to engaging in child abuse.

But the long term? The desire for freedom under popular constitutional government will not die, and neither will our national penchant for promoting it—since the alternatives are far worse. A popular desire for reform has awakened in places as diverse and unlikely as Lebanon, Libya, and Pakistan. At some point, in the not-so-distant future, despite the ordeal in Iraq, most will see that the antidote to the current pathology in the Middle East is some constitutional framework wherein the challenge of modernity is dealt with through free inquiry and debate. Otherwise, the present mess will only grow and grow before passing into a far more dangerous nuclear stage.

It was not the neoconservative support for democratization, or a determination to remove fascist regimes, that led to 9/11, but the lethal combination of appeasement of terrorism and the cynical endorsement of a Middle East dictatorial order through the Carter, Reagan, Bush I, and Clinton administrations. How peculiar, and how sad, that a mere six years after September 11, many are prepared to deem such policies preferable, if not, absurdly, to proclaim them successful.

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Daniel Henninger

BEFORE answering whether Norman Podhoretz is correct that we have the misfortune to be living through World War IV, permit me some relevant descriptive narrative.

On the Saturday I traveled down to the *Wall Street Journal's* offices in lower Manhattan to write this essay, my trip from the edge of Ground Zero through the World Financial Center's now-restored Winter Garden took me past five groups of tourists numbering about twenty each. All were there to see Ground Zero. One group was standing by a window overlooking the site itself—still mostly stained concrete walls—while a tour guide explained the events of September 11.

For six years, I have watched these tourist groups arrive here *every day*. Many are middle-class Europeans, young and old, from Italy, Spain, France, and Germany. Many snap photos, trying to capture the entire sixteen-acre pit. Why do they come? Because virtually everyone in the world, together, while the event was happening, watched the two towers burn and collapse. They know that fanatical Islamic men did it, and the details of their plot. I persist in believing that the world's watching those two office towers fall in real time produced an event of collective memory unique in history, and that its enduring effect on the consciousness of civilized peoples has been underestimated.

When I turned on my computer at the office that Saturday, the first news story I read was about the alleged leader of al Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi. On an Islamist website, the pseudonymous al-Baghdadi had offered \$100,000 for the murder of Lars Vilks, a cartoonist in Sweden whose drawing of Muhammad "dared insult our prophet." The offer was upped to \$150,000 if Vilks was "slaughtered like a lamb"—that is, with his throat cut. Al-Baghdadi also threatened attacks on Swedish companies, naming Ericsson, Volvo, Ikea, and Electrolux. All are global companies, which could be struck anywhere.

THAT WE ARE in a war touching most of the world's peoples, as did previous world wars, and that this war is with a strain of Islam infused with homicidal fanaticism, appears to me irrefutable. And I do not believe that the world's peoples, particularly here or in Europe, are complacent about it. They know that a determined enemy exists, know what that enemy can do, and, I believe, would like someone to figure out how to lead them against this enemy.

Right now, the world is not being led, in part be-

cause the Democratic party has resisted allowing this particular American President to serve in that role, instead dividing the country over the design of the war on terror—detentions, interrogations, surveillance, and the like. Therefore, a big question for the future success of this war is whether, should a Republican win in 2008, the Democratic party will continue its challenge to the traditional world-leadership role of the U.S. presidency.

One of the great benefits of Norman Podhoretz's intentionally provocative assertion that World War IV has begun is that it forces the argument toward defining the war. I am thinking in terms of a military doctrine. Obviously this war is not likely to involve the massed armies of the past century, much less the array of forces at Constantinople, which fell in 1453 to a Muslim army of several hundred thousand. After defeating Saddam's conventional army in 2003, the U.S., it seems clear in retrospect, did not find a military doctrine appropriate for the Islamic insurgency until it adopted General David Petraeus's counterinsurgency plan in January 2007. On the evidence, that plan is making substantial gains.

Its relevance as doctrine, however, is broader. The Iraq insurgency, as with Islamic terror so far, has consisted mainly of highly explosive and dramatic bombings. Bali, the Madrid train station, the London subways—all were bombings. In his testimony to Congress, General Petraeus summed up the components of a strategy to "counter" this kind of warfare:

To do counterterrorism requires conventional as well as all types of special-operations forces, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets.

This encapsulates the worldwide war that must be waged against Islamic extremism. What we face is not the least bit like a conventional world-war battlefield. This war is being fought wholly amid civilian population centers; thus, any conceivable doctrine will have to include surveillance and intelligence as crucial elements. What that means is that the unending political battle in Washington over electronic surveillance and "intel" has to be won. Otherwise, if this internal American political battle is not won, the world's cities will become increasingly vulnerable to bombs or, once the ingredients of WMD are purchased or assembled, worse.

AS FOR a political doctrine, democratization, in Norman Podhoretz's view, may be the only force strong enough to contain the centrifugal, messian-

ic ideology of jihadism. The "realist" opposition to this notion has been intense. As with the Democratic refusal to support, say, warrantless wiretaps, the realists' animosity to the Bush Doctrine and to "the neocons" seems as much personal grudge as theory. Both sides, however, err by undervaluing a force likely to play as great a role in taming Islam as either military containment or elections: namely, economics.

And specifically a more liberalized trade regime. Yes, it is boring, but it is also necessary, *and* it is explicitly part of the Bush Doctrine. Bush in 2003 proposed the Middle East Free Trade Agreement. Already, however, U.S. labor groups are in opposition to it, and mainly against Jordan, which has attracted investment from Wal-Mart, Liz Claiborne, Kohl's, L.L. Bean, and others.

What, across history, has been "normal" life for the world's males? Working at some job during the day and coming home to one's family at night. Autarky is dead. In the modern world, trade is imperative. If our politics ignore or thwart trade, why feign shock when the young men in Middle Eastern countries spend their idle hours at jihad rather than at an honest job?

The Bush Doctrine had better survive 2008. All the competing ideologies are malign or dangerous: Putin's market nationalism without democracy; China's soulless economic determinism; Iran's Hizballah-ism. Our political class should want, and publicly say it wants, Indonesia's nascent democracy of more than 200 million Muslims to improve. Why should it be any less difficult to say that we want and will encourage Iran's people to achieve a politics based on open party competition?

Those are the alternatives to what we have now. What we have now is this war.

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Martin Kramer

NORMAN PODHORETZ wants to alarm us. At a time when many in America dismiss 9/11 as an aberration, and jihadism as a specter we have conjured up to justify military adventure, he insists that the enemy is real. Mired in denial, we have re-

fused to see the obvious pattern in the succession of attacks against us, of which 9/11 constituted one more escalation. And despite 9/11, we have slipped back into our default position of complacency, while our enemies build new capabilities, construct more outposts, and inculcate hatred in the minds of millions. This is a world war, he insists, and our refusal to *name* it is the most obvious sign of our confusion.

Yet the notion of "World War IV" is also meant to reassure us. The United States prevailed in every great global contest of the 20th century, whether it took four years (World War II) or forty (the cold war). Now we confront a threat from another ideology opposed to freedom and democracy. But we have defeated such ideologies before, we tell ourselves—indeed, they are *destined* to be defeated—and once we get ourselves in gear, the outcome cannot be in doubt. It will just take a while. This world war, Podhoretz tells us, "will almost certainly go on for three or four decades."

That is *too* reassuring.

The 20th-century world wars were preceded by another species of global conflict. For more than a millennium after the rise of Islam in the 7th century, Christendom and Islam were locked in almost constant warfare. Today's war, unlike the last three world wars, is being fought largely across the very same divide of religion and civilization that separated European Christendom and Islam. The ebb and flow of that conflict extended over centuries. It is a point our enemies emphasize. "This war is fundamentally religious," bin Laden has said. "The people of the East are Muslims. They sympathize with Muslims against the people of the West, who are the Crusaders." That is what bin Laden needs this war to be, if he is to fight it on *his* terms.

We shudder to think the world might be sliding back into that sort of conflict, and so we deny even the possibility while heaping praise on Islam. "This is not a clash of religions," President Bush has said. "The faith of Islam teaches moral responsibility that ennobles men and women, and forbids the shedding of innocent blood. Instead, this is a clash of political visions." That is what we need it to be, if we are to fight it on *our* terms.

Six years after 9/11, the problem is that most Muslims believe bin Laden is right. Over the summer, a poll showed that 80 percent of the people in Egypt, Indonesia, Morocco, and Pakistan agree that the United States is trying to "weaken and divide the Islamic world." Not only have we failed to define the war for ourselves. We have failed to define it for the great mass of Muslims. The widespread belief among Muslims that we are waging

war against Islam could extend it well beyond three or four decades.

We also underestimate its breadth. We conveniently prefer to think that Iraq is the central front in this war, because the United States has 150,000 troops there. For all the defeatism deftly exposed by Podhoretz, most Americans know it would be difficult for the United States to lose in Iraq. But the danger now is that we might be outflanked. If Iran acquires nuclear weapons, or Pakistan falls to jihadists, or parts of Europe are colonized by Muslim radicals, the consequences could be dire.

Norman Podhoretz and I are foreign-policy advisers to presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani, who sees Iraq as one of many fronts. "The danger of focusing on Iraq too much," he has said,

is that we miss the fact that the war on terror is broader than Iraq and that it will go on no matter what happens in Iraq. If we accomplish everything we want to accomplish and more in Iraq, it's not going to win the war on terror. And if we don't, it's not going to lose the war on terror.

We have a tremendous stake in the battle for Iraq. But if we invest too little on other fronts because of it, we could lose the war.

FINALLY, WE have underestimated the resourcefulness of our enemies in exploiting our desire for democracy. Neoconservatives continue to deny the obvious: our Islamist enemies turn every "democratic" opening into their opportunity. Norman Podhoretz rightly pillories Jimmy Carter for having sacrificed the shah of Iran and allowed Ayatollah Khomeini, a "radical Islamist despot," to seize power. The "blind" Carter administration "thought the United States would be better off without allies like the shah." Alas, this blindness is perfectly emulated today by those who would cast aside Egypt's Hosni Mubarak on the off chance that the Muslim Brotherhood will not replace him. Democracy promoters compete with jihadists in denouncing the evils of the Saudi monarchy, Pakistan's president, and even Jordan's king.

In World War II, Franklin Roosevelt allied with Stalin to defeat Hitler. Norman Podhoretz elsewhere has said that that alliance "was as much a moral imperative as it was a case of *realpolitik*." This war cannot be won without similar alliances, and shunning them will only abet our enemies.

For the Bush Doctrine to survive Bush, it will have to incorporate all we have learned since he formulated it. Much of it comes down to this: the

Middle East is not Europe, Iraq is not Germany, and Afghanistan is not Japan. (They are not Vietnam, either.) The road to hell is paved with bad analogies, which are no substitute for lived experience and specific knowledge. According to the Greek poet Archilochus, "the fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." The hedgehogs have taken the Bush Doctrine as far as they can. Now it is the turn of the foxes.

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William Kristol

MANY OF THE quarrels that dominate American politics today turn on the status of 9/11. Is it to be understood primarily as a tragedy, or as an attack? A moment to move beyond, or a defining moment? A talking point, or a turning point?

Norman Podhoretz considers 9/11 an attack, a defining moment, and a turning point. The *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman, who is as prominent a figure in the liberal foreign-policy establishment as Podhoretz is in the neoconservative counterestablishment, would beg to differ. Three years after 9/11, Friedman criticized the Bush administration and its supporters for being "addicted to 9/11." Friedman looked forward to the day when September 11 would once again be restored

to its rightful place on the calendar: as the day after September 10 and before September 12. I do not want it to become a day that defines us. Because ultimately September 11 is about them—the bad guys—not about us. We're about the Fourth of July.

Now Norman Podhoretz, whose most recent memoir bears the title *My Love Affair with America*, is no slouch when it comes to celebrating the Fourth of July. But he would surely diagnose Friedman's comments as symptomatic of liberals' lack of seriousness. It would be nice to wish away the significance of 9/11 because one does not "want it to become a day that defines us." But wishful thinking—however precious—is still wishful thinking.

What neoconservatives know is that we are not

simply free to choose what defines us. They also know that 9/11 was not simply "about them—the bad guys." It was, and is, also about us. It is about acts of heroism in New York and at the Pentagon and aboard United Flight 93. And it is about our subsequent response to that day's attack—a response that has featured a fair amount of courage and honor and even, on occasion, genuine nobility.

Podhoretz's book is unembarrassedly framed by 9/11. He quotes one liberal internationalist bemoaning the "post-11 September reorientation of American foreign policy." In response, he argues that 9/11 demanded just such a reorientation, and that the President deserves great credit for providing one. The Bush Doctrine—at least as proclaimed, if not always in practice—consists of an intolerance of terror or state sponsorship of terror, a willingness to consider preemption, especially against terror-states developing weapons of mass destruction, and a commitment to fostering liberal democracy as part of a solution to the problems of the Middle East. Podhoretz ably makes the case for such a reorientation of American foreign policy.

Is "WORLD WAR IV" the best term for the struggle we are in? About that I am less convinced. Analogies to the early years of the cold war, or to the rocky course of World War II, can be helpful in stimulating thinking about the challenges we face—but in the end an analogy is just an analogy. And, as is par for the course for many grand historical analogies, the differences in the cases cited are often as striking as the similarities, as Podhoretz himself sometimes acknowledges. I might add that I am also not convinced of the utility of the term Islamofascism, since the modifier seems more fundamental to the phenomenon than the noun. I would incline to use either jihadism, our enemies' own term, or takfirism, the term favored by mainstream Muslims fighting the terrorists.

But whatever one's terminological preferences, the core of Podhoretz's case is eminently sensible: that, post-9/11, we live in a new world, requiring new thinking. He provides much useful guidance to such thinking, especially with respect to the war over the war: i.e., the domestic political fights both over Iraq and over the broader struggle against terror-sponsoring dictators and death-loving jihadists. Podhoretz is alarmed by the strength of the anti-war movement and of anti-Americanism more broadly. But he is heartened by the strengths of America, particularly "the young Americans in uniform, all volunteers." To them, he offers a striking tribute: "In their determination, their courage, and

their love of country, they are by all accounts a match, and more than a match, for their forebears." The 9/11 generation is one reason Podhoretz is able to resist Whittaker Chambers-like despair.

Doubts are harder to avoid when one turns to the question of our leaders. But here, too, there are reasons for hope. Bush has in many respects risen to the occasion, and today's leading Republican presidential candidates do not seek to shirk our post-9/11 responsibilities. For their part, the Democratic candidates at least occasionally show signs of knowing better than their campaign rhetoric typically suggests. But it is true that the vacuousness of the mainstream media, the childishness of many in Congress, and the fatuousness of the foreign-policy establishment—these do not fill one with confidence.

The columnist Mark Steyn recently reported on a speech at a 9/11 commemoration ceremony by Deval Patrick, the liberal governor of Massachusetts. September 11, said Patrick, was "a failure of human beings to understand each other, to learn to love each other." Steyn's comment:

We should beware anyone who seeks to explain 9/11 by using the words "each other": they posit a grubby equivalence between the perpetrator and the victim—that the "failure to understand" derives from the culpability of both parties.

And, Steyn continued:

It was the failure of one group of human beings to understand that the second group of human beings was determined to kill them that led the crew and passengers of those Boston flights to stick with the obsolescent 1970's hijack procedures until it was too late. Unfortunately, the obsolescent 1970's multiculti love-groove inclinations of society at large are harder to dislodge.

Since 9/11, these destructive inclinations have begun to be dislodged. They would be further dislodged—perhaps even routed—if more of our leaders were animated by just a bit of Norman Podhoretz's implacable determination and fighting spirit.

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Andrew C. McCarthy

IN HIS characteristically powerful new book, Norman Podhoretz could not be more right in describing our great struggle against Islamic extremism as World War IV, portraying the stakes involved, and identifying Iraq as a key early theater in the conflict. My disagreements, which are considerably less consequential than our agreements, lie in the area of democracy promotion—both its significance to the Bush Doctrine and its utility as a strategy for victory.

It is profoundly disappointing that, only six years after 9/11, and three decades after the onslaught of militant Islam in its latest iteration, it should still be necessary to discuss whether we are embroiled in an epic battle for the survival of our way of life. Yet that is where we find ourselves, notwithstanding the endurance—indeed, according to the latest National Intelligence Estimate, the resurgence—of an incorrigible enemy.

In several ways, we are better off today than we were six years ago. In the 1990's, when radical Islam was at war and we were not, the point of the counterterrorism spear (in fact, pretty much its totality) was the criminal-justice system. But prosecutions neutralized only a tiny fraction of the growing enemy: fewer than three dozen convicted over eight years of attacks, and those mostly low-level players. This emboldened the extremists, inviting more attacks. Since President Bush has taken up the challenge and fought the war as a war, we have significantly improved internal security while killing and capturing thousands of jihadists, mainly overseas. It is not an accident that we have not been attacked domestically.

On the other hand, the administration has done a poor job communicating what we are doing and why we must do it—would that it had had Norman Podhoretz on the case full-time. Yes, the President has given several eloquent speeches. Contrary to the case in the first three world wars, however, the nation does not exhibit a vested interest in the outcome. It is as if the burdens of the war have been delegated to the American armed forces and their families while the rest of us blithely go about our lives—an oddity I wish I could better explain after a massive domestic attack and continuous, unabashed promises of a reprise. This national ennui couples dangerously with such revolutionary developments of our age as the rise of international law, the shift in civil-rights emphasis from the common weal to the individual and his privacy, and the suspicion with which we regard executive power.

The result is dangerous vulnerability. The national mood shifts away from war's sense of urgency, back toward the notion of jihadism as a nuisance to be managed by legal processes and diplomatic engagements. The enemy makes great inroads here at home, where concerns about due process for terrorists generate more angst than does the suffering of terror victims.

Concurrently, al Qaeda is emerging as a stronger network. Immediately after 9/11, with its command-and-control decimated and its hierarchy in flight, the movement became more dependent on widely dispersed cells, which became more autonomous but less capable. Now, however, even as these cells have adapted and become more effective, the network's leadership has been permitted to reestablish itself in Pakistan and other safe havens. Money (particularly Saudi money) and the Internet have also made the animating ideology more accessible than ever, meaning that cells can emerge without the need of an established jihadist organization to recruit and guide them. And behind it all, Iran grows more capable and menacing—harboring and nurturing al Qaeda, replicating its Hizbullah model in Iraq and beyond, and pursuing nuclear weaponry while the West dithers.

This increases the stakes of Iraq—to say nothing of Afghanistan, where NATO's lack of commitment is a very disturbing development. I have been a supporter of the surge of U.S. forces because it is a necessary step; but it is far from sufficient. Meaningful progress in this war, as Podhoretz has argued, is going to require dealing with Iran. General David Petraeus's report underscores that unavoidable fact. Some say such talk is war-mongering, but it is actually war-recognition. Iran is at war with us now, just as it and the other components of the jihadist movement were at war with us in the 1990's. It should not take another 9/11 to come to grips with that reality. That is the cutting edge of the 2008 election: reality, or the return of September 10th America.

I DO NOT question that the rhetoric of democracy promotion has pervaded the President's articulation of the Bush Doctrine. Nevertheless, the fact that the doctrine has multiple tenets does not mean that each of them is equally important, or that the tenets cohere.

The issue here, moreover, is more complex than "neoconservatives versus realists." I am a conservative who does not fit in either category. Contrary to the realists, I agree that democracy promotion is in our long-range interest and stability by tyranny is

not. But, with due respect to my neoconservative friends, a healthy respect for democracy worthy of the name recognizes that (a) it calls for a cultural transformation that cannot be brought about quickly, (b) it is of dubious value as a counterterrorism tool, and (c) it may be an impossibility in a society committed to maintaining an Islamic identity.

On the last two points, it is noteworthy that jihadist atrocities are commonly planned and carried out inside Western democracies. There are a variety of good reasons to promote democracy abroad, but protection against jihadism is evidently not one of them. Further, the principal root cause of terrorism is Islamic ideology, not a want of the benefits democracy affords; so the premise that democracy would eradicate radicalism is flawed. Finally, we conflate democracy with liberty, but the two are saliently different.

For many Muslims (not just terrorists), rejection of Western democracy is a free choice. In fact, the Islamic conception of freedom, which connotes willful submission to Allah and His law, is critically different from our understanding of the term. We need to understand better the ideology we are dealing with, and to be speaking the same language, before we can realistically assess the prospects of democratization.

In the meantime, as Norman Podhoretz shows, there is a war to be won. We did not start the Marshall Plan in 1943. Assuming for argument's sake that Muslim countries will eventually democratize (as we understand democracy), that would, at most, suppress this enemy's resurgence. But first the enemy has to be defeated.

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David Pryce-Jones

NORMAN PODHORETZ clarifies the crisis in which we now find ourselves by describing it as World War IV. There are affinities to the preceding World War III, otherwise known as the cold war. Once more, it is hard to separate the hatred our enemies feel for us from their envy. The evident inferiority complex is irrational, therefore intractable. Ever since influential Muslims began

to maintain that the weaknesses of their societies were not their fault at all but were inflicted upon them by the malevolent West, World War IV has been in preparation. For a time, it was uncertain whether nationalists or Islamists would wage it.

Ayatollah Khomeini settled that issue. Iran is a country of great potential, and his seizure of power there in 1979 has proved as consequential as the Bolshevik coup of 1917. Khomeini transformed Iran into a testing ground for the view that Islamist jihad is a mobilizing principle strong enough to avenge the political and cultural supremacy of the West. He and now his heirs have made it plain that they see themselves engaged in outright war. In a similar spirit, and with comparable rhetoric, too, the Soviet Union used to project capitalism as a bogey incompatible with peaceful coexistence.

The comparison goes further. Communism divided into the Soviet and the Chinese versions, both of which masked nationalist impulses at their core; and Islamism contains Sunni and Shiite versions that also reflect core nationalist differences between Arabs and Persians. Alarmed by the Iranian Shiite revolution, and therefore fired to emulate it, Saudi Arabia, far and away the richest Sunni state, has fostered al Qaeda and the hate-mongering imams and madrassas behind many of the initial aggressions of World War IV. Although these Sunni and Shiite rivals occasionally collaborate—on the Israel front, for instance—they are more usually in competition to see who can do the most damage to the West while at the same time mustering for armed showdown between themselves.

ISLAMIST TERROR attacks have brought the war home in one country after another. Since 9/11, better intelligence and doses of luck, coupled with the disgust that many if not most Muslims feel for those committing murder in their name, have restricted these outrages. More directly, we have taken the war to the jihadists in Afghanistan, Somalia, and Iraq. We intend to defend ourselves, in other words, and have the means to do so. Although, for some unfathomable reason, the number of front-line jihadist casualties is never exactly specified, it runs into the thousands, with thousands more held in prison in the whole gamut of Muslim countries.

The hope, the ambition, is to construct peaceful nation-states out of the tribal and sectarian groupings whose various allegiances and identities have generated so much past violence, and are capable of generating still more in the present. The struggle for supremacy among tribes and sects is

the real cause of the weaknesses that for centuries have bedeviled Muslim society, and created the feelings of humiliation and inferiority vis-à-vis others. The likes of Khomeini and Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden acquire and hold power by accommodating only those of their very own kind, to the exclusion of everyone else. Absolute rule becomes a self-perpetuating process of oppression and tyranny.

During my own travels in the Middle East over many years, I have made a point of asking what political arrangements people would favor. The almost invariable answer is democracy. This is not to ask for bicameralism and the separation of powers, but more modestly for the rule of law, an end to corruption, and some form of accountability, some process of representation able to pay heed and respond to grievances and injustice.

Such an outcome, however imperfect, would confront the exclusivity of tribe and sect, of Sunni and Shiite, and allow differences to be resolved by compromise rather than violence. After World War I, the British tried to restructure Iraq on just such lines, but the experiment was deemed financially too costly. Ignominious in itself, the British withdrawal condemned the entire population to decades of absolute rule, oppression, and tyranny.

Today's American intervention is far more serious in scope and implication. Iraqis once more have the choice between a new, politically inclusive model and another relapse into absolute rule, oppression, and tyranny. America's immediate difficulties only serve to demonstrate beyond doubt that democratization offers the Arab and Muslim world an escape route from its structural weaknesses. Although critics like to denigrate Western pressure to democratize the region as imperialism, it is the way for Muslims and non-Muslims in the end to meet on equal terms.

NOR IS THIS just disinterested altruism. Whatever the outcome in Iraq, the Sunni-Shiite polarity will continue to condition the wider region. In the geostrategic dimension, the United States has created an unexpected three-cornered contest, whereby its armed forces, and therefore its political weight, are in place between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The mutual rivalry of these two countries is a dynamo driving Islamist jihad to spread destruction and death far and wide.

One possibility would be for the West to concede a victory to the Shiites in Iran and Iraq, leaving the Sunnis to make what they could of it. Alternatively, the Sunnis could be expected to be

grateful in the event of America's at last picking up the challenge so regularly and aggressively issued by Iran, and doing whatever has to be done to check the Khomeinist revolution and Iran's nuclear program. Whichever way one looks at it, the American military presence close to Iran's borders demonstrates superpower responsibility.

Crucial choices ahead will determine the course of World War IV, and the fate of millions with it. President Bush has put the United States in a position of potential strength as the arbiter of the future order in the Middle East, and it is dismaying that so many people refuse to recognize this. Norman Podhoretz rightly fears yet another possibility: that commentators in the media and opposition personalities have infected public opinion with a thoughtless and unworthy defeatism, and that party politics are assuming priority over the national interest.

If that is indeed the case, the indefinite prolongation of World War IV will have to be accepted, with who knows what damage inflicted by the Islamists on Muslims and non-Muslims alike and the quite unnecessary sacrifice of America's standing and ultimately its security. More likely, surely, is that whoever is next in the White House will carry on where President Bush left off. Too much is at stake for anything else.

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Claudia Rosett

YES, WE HAVE entered World War IV—and the designation “IV” is telling. Norman Podhoretz correctly identifies this war as the latest round in the long and mutating struggle between totalitarianism and freedom. More broadly, we are entering the second century of a global showdown between systems in which governments answer to their people and systems in which they do not.

In this context, Islamofascism is clearly the most virulent and immediate danger. But the threat hardly ends there. If I have a criticism of Podhoretz's superb tour and analysis of the hot front in this new world war, it is that he underestimates the damage done to us in this war by some of the

major non-Islamic despotisms, which in their own efforts to deflect democracy are only too pleased to strike back-scratching deals with Islamofascist regimes.

Along with such obvious candidates as the totalitarian munitions-merchant North Korea, or our near-neighbor Venezuela, these regimes include the two great powers of Russia and China. Lest that list sound too alarmist, or simply too overwhelming, let me add that I agree with Podhoretz's warning that we cannot simultaneously tackle every villainous government on earth. But in understanding why we had to topple Saddam early on, and why democracy is the only real answer, I think we must keep in mind that behind Islamofascism is a brew of interests that, however disparate, have this in common: they shun democracy and in various ways tend to support each other in fighting and subverting its spread. Thus do we find China and Russia, our erstwhile allies against Islamo-terrorists, blocking one U.S. attempt after another to shut down or stymie the regimes that produce these killers and their medieval creeds.

IN THIS CONTEXT, Iraq has been a crucial early theater of World War IV, and not once but twice. To explain why, let us go back to the end of the cold war and exhume a phrase rarely mentioned these days: the New World Order. Whatever follies played out under that label in the 1990's, there was a basic truth to the idea that as the Soviet empire staggered toward its 1991 collapse, the world was in a greater state of flux than at any time since the end of World War II. For better or worse, much was up for grabs.

And in 1990, one of the first to grab was Saddam Hussein, testing the rules of the nascent order with his invasion of Kuwait. When a UN coalition drove Iraq's army back out of Kuwait, it was hailed as a victory for a new age of UN-coordinated multilateralism. The terrible mistake, however, was to leave Saddam in power in Baghdad. Not only was Saddam himself a malignant presence, but the message was sent that while there might be penalties to breaking the basic codes of international conduct, the penalties would not be equal to the offense. The rest of the feel-good decade of the 1990's, in which America tolerated everything from escalating terrorist attacks, to North Korea's nuclear extortion racket, to Yasir Arafat's grotesque manipulations of the “peace process,” did not help.

Rectifying that early, signal mistake over Saddam was a profoundly important reason for the current President Bush to choose Iraq as an early front in

America's response to September 11. So was the need to stop the brazen rejuvenation of an unrepentant, expansionist, terror-based Baghdad regime that by 2003 had spent years making a complete mockery of UN sanctions; cheating, corrupting, and rearming its way back into business with or without weapons of mass destruction.

The overthrow of Saddam, the toppling of the Taliban, the declaration of the Bush Doctrine—all these early, aggressive actions by America brought progress on a number of fronts. Libya gave up its nuclear program, Lebanon tried to shake the murderous occupation by Syria. Elsewhere in the Middle East, democratic dissent began bubbling up. And, as of this writing, America for more than six years has escaped any major terrorist assault, something I attribute not solely to our home-front measures but to the Bush Doctrine of preemption and democratization—which has helped keep our enemies preoccupied abroad.

If Bush could give us one parting gift, beyond his determination to stay the course in Iraq, it should be greatly to ease that course by bombing enough of Iran's nuclear-related infrastructure to persuade not only the mullahs but their Islamofascist neighbors, clients, and rivals that America has no interest in losing its wars. Given the climate in Washington, that seems unlikely. With the Left now ascendant in our domestic debates and howling for denial in our time, Bush himself has retreated on some fronts from the Bush Doctrine—negotiating with terror sponsors and deferring a reckoning with Iran.

Another folly has been our return, post-Saddam, to the corrupt councils of the UN. This institution more often than not comes between America and our would-be allies among the subjugated people of the world, not all of whom look forward to a life of jihad and repression. The UN, by dignifying dictators and attending upon their "votes," deals one blow after another to those among their captive subjects who aspire to remove them. The gross disservice done to Iranian dissidents by the annual UN-hosted celebrity appearance of Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in New York is one example. The UN's Orwellian "Human Rights Council" is another.

But if it looks as if America is now in the process of scrapping the Bush Doctrine altogether, I think the next President will not in practice find that so easy. We are in a world war that America cannot avoid. The challenges, if unmet, will continue to grow. The next big attack will come. Primed by the liberty and law of our own democratic system,

Americans did much to create today's world of high technology, instant messages, and global markets. The benefits are vast, including the spread in many quarters of greater wealth, health, and freedom. But along this network, poisonous ideologies and their foot soldiers can also hitch, or hijack, a high-speed ride. We are not fighting for democracy in foreign lands out of altruism—in any event, a treacherous guide. We are fighting to gain strategically vital ground against enemies who must put out the light of the great American experiment of democracy if they are to prevail in their dreams of power and plunder under cover of a new dark age.

That contest, not some whimsical U.S. mission of global good will, is why the Bush Doctrine has it so very right in putting democratization front and center as our natural cause and best hope. For most of us, despite the shock of September 11, the full character of the threat against us has yet to be felt in our daily lives. When it is, this country will go to war to win.

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Amir Taheri

I HAVE NO problem describing the current struggle as World War IV. With varying degrees of intensity, this war is being fought in 22 countries across the globe—from Indonesia and Thailand to the Sudan and Algeria. Many other countries, among them almost all the 57 nations with a Muslim majority and several Western nations as well, are targets of occasional terrorist operations that the jihadists describe as *ghazva* (holy raids).

The fact that the conflict affects so many nations is not the only reason why we should agree with Norman Podhoretz in considering this a world war. Another and more important reason is that the conflict is not about such mundane things as borders, territory, or access to markets and resources. It is about the future of mankind as a whole. Here we have the clash of two visions of the world's future. One vision is that of a pluralistic global system based on the shared values of human rights, democracy, free enterprise, and international law. The other vision is inspired by a radical and rigid re-interpretation of Islam as the "Final Truth" dictated

by God, abrogating all other faiths and creeds.

The war, then, has clear ideological fronts. But its military fronts are not so clearly drawn, and this has caused some confusion. In this war, many Muslims, perhaps even a majority, are fighting against Islamism, whereas many in the West, including some late avatars of Stalinism and fascism, are objective allies of the Islamists. In other words, this is not a war between the West and the rest but between democracy, which has many supporters in non-democratic societies, and the latest challenger to democracy that is Islamofascism. At times, indeed, the war is an internal one, being fought within the same societies, and even within the same families, both in the Muslim world and in the Western democracies. Moreover, just as there were many kinds of Communism and fascism in World Wars II and III, so there are many different kinds of Islamofascism today. But all have one thing in common: their determination to reshape the world in accordance with their totalitarian vision.

THERE IS no doubt that Iraq is one of the key battlefields in World War IV—perhaps even the key one in this early phase of the global conflict. The reason is that, in Iraq, virtually all versions of Islamofascism, from Salafism to Khomeinism and including al-Qaeda-type terrorism, are present on the battlefield against a coalition of democracies led by the United States and backed by a coalition of Iraqis who reject the Islamofascist vision.

In my opinion, the larger war started in 1979 when Islamofascists seized power in Tehran. But there is no doubt that the 9/11 attacks against the United States led to a more urgent awareness. Today, six years after 9/11, the cause of the democracies and their Muslim allies has not done too badly at all.

Thus, Afghanistan and Iraq have been liberated and set on their respective paths to democratization. Lebanon has expelled the Syrian army of occupation. Algeria, Egypt, and Turkey have effectively defeated their respective terrorist enemies. Yemen has crushed both Sunni and Shiite terrorist groups that tried to create mini-“emirates” on its territory. The Islamofascists have also suffered defeat in Kashmir, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Chechnya. In Iran, civil society has started to organize resistance to the Khomeinist regime, especially with the blossoming of an independent trade-union movement.

In addition, a number of Arab states have inaugurated constitutional reforms and free elections, both at national and municipal levels, in some cases

for the first time in their history. Certain democratic ideas, like popular consent as the key source of legitimacy, have similarly been introduced, and are beginning to strike roots in societies that hitherto shunned the global trend toward democratization.

In this connection, Norman Podhoretz is surely right in asserting that “democratization represents the best and perhaps even the only way to defeat Islamofascism and the terrorism it uses as its main weapon against us.”

Critics of the Bush Doctrine assert that democracy cannot be imposed by force. I agree. But as far as I am aware, Bush never suggested otherwise. In fact, he said: “America will not impose our own style of government on the unwilling. Our goal instead is to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom, and make their own way.” Nevertheless, there are times and places where force can and must be used in order to remove impediments to democracy. Both the Taliban and the Baathists had to be uprooted by force before Afghanistan and Iraq could have a chance to consider democratization as an option.

I have no doubt that the Bush Doctrine will survive as a key element of American national security even if the Republicans lose the White House next year. As long as there are places on earth where terrorists can regroup, train, and prepare attacks, the U.S., and indeed all democracies, will be threatened. By taking action in Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. showed that it had not been cowed by the terrorist attacks and was prepared to fight in distant places and against deadly enemies.

Still, during the past six years, two key battlegrounds have not received the attention they merit. The first is the battleground of public opinion in Western democracies. There, under the banner of anti-Americanism, a broad coalition of Left and Right, in de-facto alliance with the Islamofascists, preaches a gospel of defeat and surrender. This anti-American coalition, which is, in fact, the enemy of democracy, must be taken on and defeated. Some time soon, the U.S. will also have to find ways and means of re-mobilizing its allies, especially in Europe, for the inevitable confrontation with the Khomeinist regime in Tehran.

The second battleground is that of public opinion in Muslim countries. Here, American public diplomacy has been nonexistent or even counterproductive. In some Muslim countries, U.S. diplomacy has even harmed the nascent democratic forces by emphasizing Washington’s support for authoritarian regimes in the name of *realpolitik*.

Democracy can and must win the current world war, just as it won all three previous ones.

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Ruth Wedgwood

IN A SENSE it is true that "everything changed" on September 11—certainly in our understanding of where things were headed. Before the appearance of al Qaeda on these shores, only an army or an earthquake could kill 20,000 to 50,000 people in a morning. Had 9/11 not been primary day in New York, with many people going first to vote and thus being late for work, the lives lost in that single morning could easily have numbered in the tens of thousands. And that is what al Qaeda *wanted*.

This escalation in the methods of terror—linking eschatology and mass violence—means that other groups may aspire to at least the same degree of intimidation and wreckage. Violence has been reconceived, to focus on targets with a central place in a society's self-understanding. The destruction of an Irish pub on the Derry Road has been replaced by the collapse of a major landmark. Al Qaeda advertised this weird aesthetic of obliteration in its earlier 1993 plot in New York, interrupted by the police, that sought to blow up the United Nations, the George Washington bridge, and the Lincoln and Holland tunnels in one grand chaotic gesture. The same nihilism also yielded the al-Qaeda bombing of Iraq's Golden Mosque of Samarra in February 2006, which not only destroyed a sacred shrine but ransacked a tentative accord between Sunni and Shiite factions, and severely impeded the search for a new balance of power in Iraq.

America and its next President, regardless of party, will thus continue to face extreme difficulty in preserving the safety of our citizens and assisting Islam to regain its bearings. The political parlor game of should-we-or-should-we-not-have-intervened-in-Iraq-in-2003 should not distract from this verity. Even within the four corners of the "Iraq question"—and, with the ferocious intermeddling of Syria, Iran, and al Qaeda, Iraq does not have four corners—no critic of administration

policy has stopped to wonder whether the intervention against Saddam might have gone better if we had acted in 1998, when Saddam first kicked out the American inspectors. In the event, we undertook to fight a war after allowing our opponent five years to prepare. Saddam used the time to sequester billions of dollars, truck his equipment to Syria, and empty his prisons, preparing his turn-key resistance during the slow diplomatic burn that preceded the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

And what if we had delayed intervention, past 2003? What then? In the face of French and Russian pressure, the lifting of Security Council sanctions and the opening of a new spigot of money for weapons purchases were all but ordained. And with the progress of Iran's nuclear program, would not Saddam inevitably have reconstituted his WMD portfolio to fight a second Iran-Iraq war?

WE HAVE been sorely challenged in adapting our methods of land warfare against the hydra-headed insurgency in Iraq. The fight has been costly and rugged. It is startling how often in our polite society, with its publishers and professors, we lose sight of the reasons why American soldiers on the ground think the mission is important. There is equally little sense, in our post-ROTC world, of the solemn virtues of selflessness and courage that soldiers live by. Writers who have railed at our passivity in Rwanda might celebrate the braver course we have sustained in Iraq, trying to protect innocent lives from death by car bomb.

The mélange of threats coming from the Muslim world and the demimonde of weapons proliferation will call for different skills and capacities in government. Within the intelligence community, a new generation of linguists must be trained to decrypt conversations conducted in Pashtun, Arabic, Farsi, and Korean, as well as in computer code. Intelligence collection can be stymied when the unit size for lethal combat is limited to al-Qaeda squads of three or four. Analyzing the loose chains of linkage, in phone numbers, leases, and itineraries, is not the conventional way to identify who is a "soldier," and penetration is far more difficult in this unconventional war.

In addition, there is the problem of states that provide sanctuary. We will face real dilemmas when foreign governments cannot thwart the misuse of their territory by al Qaeda. But international law has been usefully changed by Security Council resolution 1373, and the UN's imperative demand that states must prevent the use of their soil as training platforms for insurgents.

In a June 2001 essay in the *Washington Post's* "Outlook" section, I paid tribute to a federal prosecutor in Manhattan for winning criminal convictions after the bombing attacks on our embassies in East Africa. Truck bombs prepared by al Qaeda had toppled the buildings in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 220 and wounding more than 4,000. Many of the victims were Muslim. Acknowledging a brilliantly-conducted trial, my essay also warned that criminal charges were not enough. Behind every conviction lay an intelligence failure, and our inability to dismantle the infrastructure that generated these attacks meant that more attacks would follow.

I was approached by several veterans of the intelligence community who reported that, to their similar alarm, there was no sharing of information between intelligence and law-enforcement agencies, and hence no integrated picture of al Qaeda. I relayed their account to the senior staff of an intelligence committee on Capitol Hill. The problem was real and serious. But as my interlocutors predicted, nothing would be done about it in the extant political climate.

9/11 changed all that, too, though not soon enough. The national-security doctrine propounded by the Bush administration now holds that it is not adequate to punish mass-casualty bombers after they have attacked. Rather, the duty of any President is to protect his fellow citizens, and other innocent life, before the harm is done. The means should be proportionate, and we should speak in the language of law. But the "responsibility to protect"—a foreign-policy ideal celebrated in both liberal and conservative circles—is not discharged by convicting the suicide bomber who survives a failed attack. The pooling of information and the denial of overseas sanctuary are practical necessities if we are to thwart a terrorist organization that operates in cyberspace before it mounts terrestrial and aerial attacks.

The new mode of catastrophic terrorism can be countered only by dismantling al Qaeda's leadership, funding, and ideology. Catalyzing the necessary institutional changes in American government, and mustering the courage to act when a moment of opportunity presents itself, are the burdens that belong to any responsible President.

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James Q. Wilson

I THINK WE are and should be in a war against Islamofascist terrorism; whether we call it World War IV is, to me, immaterial. It is a war, and perhaps one of the longest and most difficult we will have ever fought.

The Bush Doctrine that defines this war may outlive the 2008 presidential elections, depending on public opinion. If the public believes, as I think it does, that we cannot fight this war on the defensive and that we must take the struggle, where appropriate and where it can make a difference, to rogue or failed nations that support terrorism, then the next President, whichever party he or she belongs to, will, perhaps after making politically suitable but largely rhetorical bows toward "the need for change," will continue the fight.

Whether this will be done effectively is another matter. As Norman Podhoretz points out in his book, scarcely any President for the last 30 years has responded to the long list of terrorist attacks to which this country has been subjected with anything more than a few cruise missiles fired into empty buildings. But the next terrorist attack (and I believe another one is very likely) will generate a demand for action that will be impossible to resist except among the agitated ranks led by George Soros and Michael Moore.

Apart from whether we will fight, the key issue is how we will know whether we have won. We have made dramatic gains in Afghanistan and Iraq, though much more needs to be done. And happily the American military has adopted a better strategy for doing it, one that we learned from the Marine Corps in Vietnam but that the Army managed to forget until General David Petraeus and his colleagues produced a masterful Army-Marines counterinsurgency field manual that is now being applied in Iraq.

IDEALLY, DEMOCRACY is our goal because, with perhaps only a few exceptions, democracies do not invade one another and they leave their people free to improve their lives. But democracy comes slowly and painfully even to countries well suited to receive it.

Of the two dozen or so predominantly Muslim nations in the world, only six can reasonably be called democratic, and acquiring that status required a long time and the overcoming of many reverses. According to Freedom House, Indonesia, Mali, and Senegal are free, and Afghanistan, Morocco, and Turkey are "partly free." These accom-

plishments took many years. Indonesia, although it became independent in 1949, was not a competitive democracy until 2003, and in the interim had to endure decades of one-party elections. Mali had an endless series of coups between its independence in 1960 and the establishment not long ago of a civilian government that has held generally free and honest elections. Senegal became independent at about the same time and managed to avoid military coups, but it also had to endure two decades of one-party rule. Today, however, it has a multiparty competition for votes.

Among the partly free Muslim countries, Afghanistan is well known to us since we brought the first hint of political freedom to that country. It is still struggling to end corruption, win the allegiance of independent tribal leaders to a central government, and empower local communities. Morocco has a powerful hereditary king, but the incumbent has helped create a popularly elected legislature and sponsored a reconciliation commission that has publicly criticized past civil-rights abuses and set forth recommendations for preventing them in the future. Turkey has been a secular state since the early 1920's, but several decades passed before it held genuinely competitive elections. The Turkish army has periodically intervened to protect the country's secular status, but today a moderate Muslim party is in power and has elected a Muslim president, albeit one who has promised to keep church and state separate.

Obviously the United States cannot be in Iraq for the 40 or 50 years it has taken other Muslim nations, several of which lack Iraq's ardent Sunni-Shiite rivalry, to become reasonably or wholly democratic. How long, then, do we stay? My answer: until Iraq has displayed the ability to maintain order with a police force that respects fundamental rights and an army that is committed to civilian rule. No doubt we will leave before Iraq enjoys democratic rule of the kind practiced in Canada, Great Britain, or the United States; but we must remain there until a reasonable observer can say that the nation is on a course leading to popular government.

As Max Boot has pointed out in the September COMMENTARY ("How Not to Get Out of Iraq"), no one has devised a "Plan B" that has any reasonable chance of success. It is logistically impossible to leave immediately; the country cannot be divided into religiously coherent states; and Americans must remain in significant numbers to keep Iraqi security forces intact and improving just as NATO forces have been kept in Bosnia for over a decade.

We cannot "guard the borders" without running concentration camps for seized infiltrators. Although we may be tempted to back a decent authoritarian (Boot calls this "Saddam Lite"), there is no one available who might play that role and has sufficient force to compel obedience.

The last thing we should do is to announce, as many members of Congress have done, "goals" that the current Iraqi government must meet in order to keep us there. When Congress recently instructed the Government Accountability Office to inform us whether Iraq had formed a constitutional-review committee, enacted a law on de-Baathification, or decided to create a High Electoral Commission, it was not "measuring progress," it was looking for excuses for us to leave.

In a co-authored September 10 essay in the *Wall Street Journal*, Senators John McCain and Joseph Lieberman made the central issue quite clear. The choice we face in Iraq is not between the current government and a perfect one, but "between a young, imperfect, struggling democracy . . . and the fanatical, al-Qaeda suicide bombers and Iranian-sponsored terrorists who are trying to destroy it." Though there are good reasons to worry that elections will from time to time bring to power undemocratic regimes, there is no reason to believe that Muslims are incapable of democratic government.

In refuting this notion, Podhoretz quotes Bernard Lewis: to think that the Islamic people are incapable of civilized government "shows ignorance of the Arab past, contempt for the Arab present, and unconcern for the Arab future." And, I would add, a profound ignorance of what has happened in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation.

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R. James Woolsey

I AGREE THAT "World War IV" is an accurate characterization of our war against Islamist totalitarianism. But although what the term denotes is sound—a lengthy world-wide struggle against a totalitarian enemy that is analogous to, especially, World War II and the cold war (World War III)—its connotation creates a problem. Hearing "world

war,” most people will think of D-Day, Iwo Jima, Stalingrad, etc. and thus quickly conclude that the speaker advocates principally large-scale military operations.

When I begin a conversation by calling the current struggle World War IV, I find that until the second glass of wine I am generally not successful in persuading a friend that I really do not want to invade all our enemies—especially since, like Norman Podhoretz, I supported the invasion of Iraq. So I lean toward “The Long War of the 21st Century,” which, yes, has its own connotation problems. In any case, his point—that we confront a sweeping, ideologically rooted, worldwide, determined enemy whom it will take years to defeat—is the crux of the matter.

Iraq threatens our success in this long World War IV. It is vital for us to prevail there, else we will leave a vacuum for both Sunni and Shiite Islamists to fill. But the current fighting there is, in my view, not an “early theater” in the overall war. We in the U.S. have been at war with the Middle East’s Islamist totalitarians for nearly three decades—at least since our embassy hostages were seized in Tehran in 1979. It is just that, until quite recently, only our enemies have been fighting. We should look at the Sunni and Shiite totalitarians together, since they cooperate with one another (and with secular totalitarians like Iraqi and Syrian Baathists) far more than our press, our diplomats, and our intelligence analysts have generally wanted to admit. These pundits and government officials have served us exactly as well as their grandfathers in the same professions who confidently told the world in the 1930’s that Nazis and Communists would never cooperate.

Beginning with the Carter administration’s dithering, we have done our best for a long time to convince the Islamist totalitarians that we are the “weak horse” that bin Laden rightly says will be disdained by all. In Lebanon, our embassy and our Marine barracks were blown up—and we left. Americans were thereafter kidnapped, tortured, and killed in the 1980’s—and we looked to law enforcement and tried to trade arms for hostages. In 1991 we had a half-million troops in Iraq and encouraged the Kurds and Shiites to rebel—and we then stood aside and watched them be massacred. There was an attempt to murder former President Bush in 1993—and we fired two dozen cruise missiles into an empty Iraqi intelligence headquarters at night, dealing decisively with Iraqi cleaning women and night watchmen. Our helicopters were shot down in Somalia in 1993—and we left. Our World Trade

Center was bombed in 1993—and we ignored the fact that one of the leading perpetrators took refuge in Iraq. Our East African embassies, our military barracks in Saudi Arabia, and an American warship were all bombed in the 1990’s—and we fired a few more cruise missiles ineffectually into the sands of Sudan and Afghanistan.

Now we have at least noticed that we are at war, and in Afghanistan and Iraq have begun to fight back. But in the latter case, until nearly four years into the war, we repeated the same ineffective search-and-destroy tactics used by General William Westmoreland for almost exactly the same stretch of years in Vietnam. General David Petraeus has finally been allowed to fight (clear-hold-protect) like General Creighton Abrams and the Marines. It is crucial that he be allowed to succeed. If he does, much else will go well in the overall war. If he does not, the consequences could be disastrous.

AS FOR OUR progress: the President made a huge mistake after 9/11 by telling us to “shop” instead of rallying us to a long struggle. One rallying point could have been to move us away from oil’s dominance (96 percent) of the world’s transportation market. The Saudi billionaires who fund al Qaeda, the Wahhabi imams who inspire suicide bombers to go to Iraq, the Iranian mullahs who pay for the explosive devices to kill our troops in Iraq—all get their resources from oil. We are late and are only now beginning to support real technologies—unlike such pipe dreams as hydrogen fuel cells for the family car—that can help this transition.

Our broadcasting to the Middle East has been inept and ineffective. The nation that invented Radio Free Europe forgot for years why it was so successful.

In this connection, although I agree with the Bush Doctrine’s emphasis on democratization, balloting may not come first. Instead, in many societies, one should often begin (following John Rawls and Amartya Sen) by building on existing “institutions of public reason” such as the Loya Jirga in Afghanistan. History and ownership of institutions matter. In Iraq, for example, we should have given back to the Iraqis their own 1925 constitution instead of drafting one for them, especially since in doing so we set up a copy of Weimar Germany’s historically disastrous structure of proportional representation and party lists—an electoral system that encourages factions instead of a more stable system based on single-member constituencies that encourage two parties to compete for the center.

But it is certainly true that democracies very

rarely fight one another. Since 1945, when there were about 20 democracies, Freedom House indicates that nearly 100 have been added. (Of these, admittedly, some 30 have serious problems like substantial corruption.) Those who said Japan and Germany could never be democracies have been proved wrong, as have those in years past who said the same thing of Asians, of Catholics, and of others. Mongolia, for example, is a well-functioning democracy.

However difficult the transition, giving up on any nation or people by assuming that because of their culture they will ultimately prefer tyranny to freedom is both dangerous and racist. Many of those who sign on to this assumption call themselves "realists"; they are the exact opposite.

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The Eliot Spitzer Show

Ira Stoll & Jacob Gershman

WHEN ELIOT SPITZER took office as governor of New York on January 1 of this year, even the festivities were designed to convey the vigor and ambition of the new administration. Operating on what he said was just three hours of sleep, the forty-seven-year-old Spitzer, who had won election with a whopping 70 percent of the votes cast, arrived in Albany's Washington Park for a morning run at 5:45 A.M. To the gathered crowd, aides handed out T-shirts that read: "Day 1: Everything Is Changing." After the run, Spitzer, who had been sworn in at midnight the evening before, returned to the governor's mansion and by 9:00 A.M. had signed no fewer than five executive orders.

Later in the day came the inauguration ceremony itself, which, reportedly for the first time in over a century, took place outdoors—like a presidential inauguration. The stage was built specially for the occasion at a cost of \$117,000. Spitzer wore no overcoat. After a brief speech by the new governor, Judy Collins sang "This Little Light of Mine" and the crowd adjourned to a reception on which Spitzer used \$165,000 in leftover campaign funds to pay for food and drink from some of the state's finest restaurants. The day concluded with a rousing concert at an indoor stadium.

Yet, by July, a scant seven months later, Spitzer's popularity had plummeted. And, to make matters

worse, he found himself on the front page of the state's newspapers as the target of an investigation by his successor as New York attorney general, a fellow Democrat, who found that Spitzer's top aides had misused the state police to investigate a major political foe.

How had the high hopes symbolized by the elaborate inauguration dissipated so quickly?

TO UNDERSTAND his fall one must first recall how he rose. The square-jawed son of a self-made real-estate investor, Spitzer was educated at Horace Mann, one of New York City's elite private high schools, where he was captain of the tennis team and excelled in his studies; then at Princeton, where he headed the student government; and then at Harvard Law School, where he was an editor of the law review. After six years working under Robert Morgenthau in the office of the Manhattan district attorney, where he led a high-profile investigation of the Gambino family's control of the garment industry, and a short stint as an associate at a large corporate-law firm, he founded the Center for the Community Interest, a non-profit law firm.

In light of Spitzer's background and the heavily Democratic political culture in which he was reared and had groomed himself to serve, this was a non-profit law firm with an interesting difference. Whereas the ACLU and leftist Democrats in general tended to focus on defending the rights of criminals, the Center for the Community Interest

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fought for law-abiding citizens. For example, it favored committing a notorious homeless man to an institution, defended the legality of a ban on pornography parlors, and backed "Megan's Law," a bill designed to inform residents when a released sex offender moved into a neighborhood.

If this suggests that Spitzer was himself a Democrat of a different kind, the impression would be confirmed in his 1998 run for the office of state attorney general. In the Democratic primary, Spitzer aired television commercials touting his support for mandatory HIV testing of certain criminals—leading one AIDS organization to attack him as "a mega-rich conservative lawyer" who "panders to fear of persons with HIV." In an interview before the primary, he praised New York's Republican mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, asking rhetorically "Has he been good for the city?" and answering: "By and large, yes."

Spitzer went on to win the general election against the Republican incumbent Dennis Vacco by a narrow margin. But then, once in office, he appeared to set a course that ran truer to left-wing Democratic type. His initial targets were conventional bogeymen of the Left: gun manufacturers, corporate polluters, tobacco companies, and used-car dealers. It was in a meeting with the used-car dealers that, in Spitzer's own version of events, the idea was dangled that would make him a national celebrity. Instead of hassling us, a representative of the dealers supposedly said, why not go after the Wall Street investment banks? They're *really* crooked.

SPITZER PROMPTLY launched a series of probes. It had long been an open secret that the "research" recommendations of investment banks seeking business from publicly traded companies skewed positively. Spitzer's contribution was to use his subpoena power to unearth e-mail messages that, he said, demonstrated the bias of the research. By December 2002, he announced an agreement: research analysts at brokerage houses were henceforth to be insulated from investment-banking pressure; the banks would be required to supply customers with independent stock research; and ten banks would contribute a total of \$1.4 billion to settle with Spitzer and the federal Securities and Exchange Commission.

Having chastened the big investment banks, Spitzer moved on to the mutual-fund industry, where he discovered that several large companies had been allowing hedge funds to make trades after regular trading hours, when the market was closed to other investors. Spitzer compared this practice

to "betting on a horse race after the horses have crossed the finish line." As a result of his investigation he was able to announce that one such late trader, Canary Capital Partners, led by Edward Stern, the son of pet-food billionaire Leonard Stern, had agreed to a \$40-million settlement.

Spitzer next turned to the insurance industry, charging Marsh & McLennan with bid-rigging and forcing the resignation of the company's chief executive, Jeffrey Greenberg. He also went after Greenberg's father, Maurice "Hank" Greenberg, the eighty-year-old chairman of another insurer, AIG, whom he accused of fraud. The elder Greenberg denied wrongdoing but nevertheless resigned under pressure from the company he had spent decades building. And finally Spitzer turned his attention to the New York Stock Exchange itself, suing its former chief executive, Richard Grasso, in an effort to get him to return some of the \$187 million he had been paid—according to Spitzer, an unreasonable and excessive amount.

Spitzer's campaigns against Wall Street came under angry criticism, on several grounds. Spitzer, it was said, had encroached on territory properly belonging to the federal government, exploiting a 1921 New York State law that gave him wide-ranging power. Moreover, rather than bringing cases to trial where the charges could be aired in open court, he often sought settlements and then dictated their terms without judicial oversight, as if, in the words of a *Wall Street Journal* editorial, he was the "Lord High Executioner" of Wall Street. Then, too, rather than returning settlement money to individual investors, he sometimes dispensed it at his own constituency-building discretion to institutions like law schools, the Police Athletic League, the Hispanic Federation, and various charities in upstate New York. When he did dare to take a case to trial, he usually lost, suggesting the charges were baseless to begin with. He also used bullying, abusive tactics, appearing on ABC's *This Week* to accuse Maurice Greenberg of fraud before filing any charges against him, and telling John Whitehead, a friend of Greenberg, that "it's now a war between us. . . . I will be coming after you." Finally, he had acted as an enabling force for trial lawyers—as it happens, one of his main sources of campaign contributions—who followed up on each of his investigations with their own class-action lawsuits for which they stood to garner fees in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

To each of these criticisms, Spitzer had an answer. Settlements, he asserted, were friendlier to business and better for the economy than either in-

dicting and destroying entire banks or marching executives out of their homes in handcuffs. His discretionary allocation of settlement funds was the exception rather than the rule, and happened only because it would have been too difficult to identify individual victims. More broadly, he argued that, by increasing transparency and making sure that small investors could depend on getting fair treatment, he was strengthening the efficiency of the market system.

WHATEVER one's position on these matters, there is no denying that in taking on Wall Street, Spitzer ensured himself a national reputation. The *Financial Times* named him "Man of the Year." *Time* named him "Crusader of the Year," enthusing extravagantly: "There has not been such an affirmation of what's right since Moses and the Ten Commandments." Spitzer had become such a big deal that a *Washington Post* reporter wrote a full-length biography under the title, *Spoiling for a Fight: The Rise of Eliot Spitzer*.

Moreover, and despite the enemies he had made among some conservatives, respect came from across the political spectrum. Hailing Spitzer as "the single most effective battler against corporate abuses in either political party" and "a fearless advocate for consumers" with "a great track record as a defender of women's rights," the website of the hard-left *Nation* recommended him as a running mate for John Kerry in 2004. The conservative *Weekly Standard*, for its part, ran a cover article depicting him as Theodore Roosevelt. "There is no Democrat more in love with the conservative theory of the investor class," claimed the author, quoting the money manager James Cramer's description of Spitzer as "the most Republican Democrat I know."

Such wide-based favorable treatment was more than enough to help Spitzer win the Democratic nomination for governor in 2006 with 81 percent of the primary vote. In the general campaign that followed, television commercials aired by Spitzer headquarters featured the candidate in a black-and-white photograph that was an acknowledged homage to Robert Kennedy. The ads portrayed Spitzer almost messianically. In one spot, an announcer intoned:

For every New Yorker whose husband or child has to go somewhere else just to get a job. . . . For every New Yorker drowning in property taxes. . . . For every New Yorker who's been ignored . . . left out . . . who's been told you can't fight City Hall so many times they've come to

believe it. . . . For every New Yorker without a voice. . . . Listen . . . there's one strong enough for all of us.

The Republican candidate, John Faso, was a seasoned politician who had served as his party's leader in the State Assembly from 1998 to 2002 and had fended off a primary challenge from William Weld, the former governor of Massachusetts. But Faso faced an uphill battle. Early in the campaign, he had raised only \$1 million to Spitzer's \$19 million. Much of Spitzer's money came from members of the financial industry he had regulated and class-action lawyers who had benefited from his work as attorney general.

True, in debates and through effective use of the press, Faso was able to compel Spitzer to come out publicly in favor of term limits for legislative leaders and lawmakers in Albany and to promise not to raise taxes if elected. Faso also sought, with some success, to portray Spitzer as corrupt, tying him to the Democratic candidate for state comptroller, Alan Hevesi, who was the subject of an investigation by the Albany district attorney for using a state employee to drive his sick wife around and to serve as her companion. When news emerged that Spitzer had been flying to fundraisers on the private jet of a lobbyist who was bidding for a potentially lucrative gambling concession, Faso worked the "Air Spitzer" scandal until Spitzer agreed to stop taking the flights and his campaign reimbursed the lobbyist at the cost of a first-class commercial ticket.

Nevertheless, a landslide vote for Spitzer was all but foreordained. Not only would he be the first Democrat in twelve years to hold the governorship in a state in which registered Democrats outnumbered Republicans by roughly 5 to 3, but the 2006 election followed eight years of erratic performance by the Republican George Pataki. Nor did it hurt that, by the time of the election, Spitzer's reputation as a centrist had been burnished to a fine sheen. To top it off, no sooner was he elected than he sought to reassure Wall Street that he would approach his new job differently from that of attorney general. "I'll work to make sure the financial companies stay here," he declared in a post-election interview with the *Financial Times*. "We're going to look at the tax code to make sure we're not pushing capital elsewhere."

IN HIS state-of-the-state speech, delivered two days after his inauguration, Spitzer gave still further encouragement to those who held out hopes for him as (in James Cramer's words) a "Republican Democrat." Outlining his priorities, he

listed an expansion of the number of charter schools in the state, a “property-tax-cut plan,” a law to speed up the construction of new power plants, civil-confinement legislation for sexual predators, and an end to “the culture of spending” in Albany. But, in a sign of things to come, he also gave fodder to left-liberal Democrats, calling for such big-government programs as “full public financing” of political campaigns and universal pre-kindergarten.

In the months that followed, Spitzer would continue to display this sort of dual-personality position on issue after issue. In education policy, he made good on his promise to achieve an increase in the number of charter schools in the state, and he broke with the powerful teachers’ unions to propose a state income-tax deduction of \$1,000 for families with an annual income of \$116,000 or less who were paying tuition to private or parochial schools. (The latter initiative finally fell victim to union opposition.) The big education news, however, lay in the other direction: an agreement to spend an additional \$1.76 billion on education in the coming year—this, in a state that was already second in the nation in per-pupil spending.

Similarly on health care. On the one hand, Spitzer proposed \$900 million in cuts for hospitals and nursing homes, thereby incurring the ire of another powerful labor group, Local 1199 of the Service Employees International Union. When that union joined with the Greater New York Hospital Association to launch a campaign warning of the “hugely destructive” effect of Spitzer’s proposed cuts, which would “shatter the health system New Yorkers rely on,” the governor fought back, accusing his attackers of “demagoguery” and even dipping into his campaign funds to air ads of his own. In a letter to the Hospital Association, he reminded his opponents that New York was first “in Medicaid spending per capita, more than twice the national average,” and stated flatly that “New York’s health-care system is broken. New Yorkers pay far too much and get far too little in return.”

On the other hand, Spitzer also proposed to expand the state’s Medicaid program to cover children from families earning up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level—i.e., up to \$82,600 a year. In the end, no doubt partly on account of vacillations like these, Spitzer was able to impose less than half of the spending cuts he had proposed for hospitals and nursing homes.

In the area of overall spending, the same pattern prevailed. The budget Spitzer sent to the legislature would have increased state-funded spending

by considerably less than the previous year’s figure under Pataki. Yet in the budget he finally agreed to, the figure was back to Pataki-era levels and even beyond. The editorial page of the *New York Post*, which had endorsed Spitzer for governor, protested heatedly:

[T]he special interests snapped him upside-down by his ankles and shook all of the pennies out of his pockets. The result: a \$122-billion spending monstrosity.

And so it went. On taxes, Spitzer’s property-tax measure turned out to be not an actual cut but an expansion of a Pataki program that merely redistributed the burden by doling out a portion of income- and sales-tax funds as “relief.” On crime, Spitzer did manage to pass a civil-confinement law for sexual predators, but he could not persuade the legislature to pass new death-penalty legislation. On the issue of power plants, no agreement was reached at all, a dereliction whose costs were underscored by a summer blackout of Manhattan’s Upper East Side that brought subways to a halt and forced the evacuation of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

ALL IN ALL, then, while not a complete embarrassment, the governor’s first legislative session fell significantly short of the ambitions signaled in the inauguration-day hoopla. Nowadays, it would be difficult to wear a “Day 1: Everything Is Changing” T-shirt in Albany without inducing bitter laughter. In July, the governor conceded to the *New York Times* that even his own wife thought he would have been better off going into his father’s real-estate business and leaving Albany to someone else. By that time, moreover, the furor over the alleged use of the state police by Spitzer’s aides in a scheme to discredit his Republican rival Joseph Bruno was stuck on the front pages and in the evening broadcasts.

To be fair, the challenge facing Spitzer was immense. New York taxpayers are saddled with the highest state and local tax burden in the nation. Upstate New York is hemorrhaging jobs and population (during the campaign, Spitzer likened it to Appalachia). The entrenched power of organized labor ensures that the cost of state government steadily grows far above the rate of inflation. And Albany has deservedly amassed a reputation for corruption; between 2003 and 2006, nine members of the New York City delegation to the legislature were arrested, indicted, or convicted.

Still, for a man with an undisguised desire for higher national office, up to and including the

presidency, these first months in office were and remain a serious setback. And it is far from clear that Spitzer's troubles are over. If he fails to make meaningful improvements in the balance of his term, especially in the two related areas of reducing New York's tax burden and improving the upstate economy, he could find himself facing a serious re-election struggle, either from a labor-backed candidate on the Left or from a free-market challenger on the Right. It is no secret that his successor as attorney general, Andrew Cuomo, who served as housing secretary in the Clinton administration and is the son of former Governor Mario Cuomo, is eager to follow him into the governor's mansion. If that should happen, Spitzer's route to national office could be severely impeded.

Whether he succeeds or fails as governor will depend on a variety of factors. In the mind of many of his detractors, a particularly salient problem is, to be blunt, his character. Spitzer's short temper was on famous display when he yelled at the Assembly's minority leader, "I'm a f—ing steamroller, and I'll roll over you." In a conversation with another lawmaker, he reportedly disparaged the seventy-eight-year-old Bruno as "an old, senile piece of s—." To many lawmakers, both Democrats and Republicans, Spitzer is every bit the bully he showed himself to be in his treatment of Hank Greenberg and John Whitehead.

But perhaps the biggest factor is not personal but ideological. Throughout his career, Spitzer has shown instincts and predispositions that would seem to put him in the camp of the "New Democrats." This movement began in the mid-1980's, with the involvement of Bill Clinton and Al Gore, as an effort to modernize the party by reclaiming it from McGovernism and, if not reverting altogether to the political agenda of Truman, Humphrey, Kennedy, and Johnson, then at least forming a kind of "third way" between conservatism and leftism. Under the aegis of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), chaired by Clinton and later by Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, the New Democrats embraced charter schools and economic growth, favored hawkishness in foreign policy, took a tough stance on crime, and were tolerant of if not friendly to religious faith. It was the New Democrat creed that lay behind Clinton's proposal to "end welfare as we know it," his expansion of the federal death penalty, and his use of NATO air power to bring an end to the conflict in the Balkans.

The same New Democrat creed can be seen informing such Spitzer initiatives as wanting to give

parochial-school parents a tax cut in the face of opposition from the teachers' unions, not to mention his professed admiration for Mayor Giuliani or his insistence that the Iraq war was winnable. This is the Spitzer whom Bruce Reed, Clinton's domestic-policy adviser, has praised for "pushing for a number of New Democrat ideas in Albany" and for being "willing to offer new approaches and break with orthodoxy." But is it the real Spitzer? Or is the real Spitzer the one who uses the power of government to bully businessmen, who pushed for a vast expansion of the government-run health-care system in New York, who agreed to a no less vast increase in spending on the government-run public schools, and who, to top it off, in mid-September announced a new initiative to issue New York State driver's licenses to illegal immigrants?

THUS FAR, Spitzer's policy agenda as governor has been a study in ideological contradiction. Purely as a matter of political calculation, one can perhaps understand the rationale for this. Although certain policies—acting tough on crime and welfare, and pressing for school choice—have been popular with New York voters, it is far from clear that such sentiments translate into a desire for the Democratic party to return to the pro-growth and hawkish-on-national-security positions of the past.

The New Democrat creed itself has been decidedly in eclipse since Clinton left office and the party's leadership was turned over to politicians like Nancy Pelosi and Howard Dean. Joseph Lieberman, a one-time chairman of the DLC, is now an independent, having been run out of the party by its current leadership. None of the current presidential contenders attended the DLC's annual convention in 2007, leading Noam Scheiber of the *New Republic* to declare that "Today, the [DLC] has almost no constituency within the Democratic party."

Spitzer's own weak political position in New York at the moment may, from this perspective, reflect the larger national weakness of the New Democrats. But it may also reflect his own unwillingness or inability to resolve the ideological tensions within his political persona, a failure that in turn leaves him open to the criticisms of would-be supporters on all sides. As things stand now, many Republicans and conservatives dismiss him as a liberal Democrat, many leftists revile him as too conservative, and others rightly complain that, having alienated both the Left and the Right, he has paralyzed himself altogether.

Is there a way out of this dilemma? As Bill

Clinton demonstrated, it is not necessary to be a perfect New Democrat in order to succeed as enough of one. While the former President gets credit from conservatives for welfare reform and the North American Free Trade Agreement, he sharply increased federal taxes in his first term, attempted a government takeover of the health-care system, and did little to challenge the power of the teachers' unions. There is a reason New Democrats are Democrats and not Republicans, after all. Still, for a large and definable part of the electorate, even an erratic New Democrat is

preferable to the current Democratic alternative.

The absence of New Democrats on the national scene (not counting Hillary Clinton) leaves a vacuum for Spitzer to occupy. The case to be made for him in that role is admittedly thin, thanks in large part to his own waffling and overreaching. But it is better than nonexistent. In a country in which his party controls both houses of Congress, it is not too much to speculate that a governor willing to depart from left-wing orthodoxy on even a few core issues could yet play a constructive and even a winning role.

Faith in the Flesh

R.R. Reno

THAT SATURDAY morning in January, I watch as the winter sun angles through the window to break upon my daughter's hair, pulled back in a tight, neat bun. Beside my daughter stand her mother, her grandmother, and her great-grandmother. Three generations of women come to hear a fourth, my daughter Rachel, read from the Torah scroll.

We rise as the words roll out. *Vay'daber elohim et kol ha-d'varim ha-eileh leimor*. Rachel's shoulders are draped with a shimmering cloth. She has a silver pointer the size of a large pen in her hand. She is following the verses as she chants them in Hebrew, tracing out in her mind the figures of musical ornament that she has learned for singing this portion of Scripture. My parents are behind me, along with sisters and brother, nieces and nephews, and row after row of friends who fill the sanctuary.

I do not know Hebrew, but she has been practicing this recitation at home, so I know that we are standing because we have come to Exodus 20:1: "Then God spoke all these words." The words God has spoken, the words my daughter will repeat, are the Ten Commandments. We stand to receive them as they were received in the wilderness of Sinai and as they have been received by count-

less generations. So I am standing, but I confess that, as with my ignorance of Hebrew, I have only little grasp of the spiritual meaning of what she is reciting.

When I was thirteen, the age of my daughter, I was confirmed in the Church of the Redeemer in Baltimore, Maryland. I still remember the hands of Bishop Doll on my head. "Defend O Lord this Thy child with Thy heavenly grace." And had I been defended? Certainly not in the way in which Bishop Doll might have hoped. Still, on this day at Beth El synagogue in Omaha, Nebraska, my daughter speaks the words God has spoken. The scroll lives. *Anokhi adonai elobekha asher hotzeitikha me-eret mitz'rayim mi-beit avadim. Lo yih'yeh l'kha elohim aberim al panai*: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery: you shall have no other gods before Me.

Shortly after my confirmation, I rushed like Augustine to my Carthages and their hissing cauldrons of illicit loves. Fantasies of immortality clouded my judgment and stoked my arrogance. I sang hymns to myself, using easy Emersonian commitments as devices for spiritual adventure, savoring what I imagined to be my boldness as a mark of achievement. In the lists of love I sharpened my mind as a warrior might sharpen his sword: to rush the citadels and slay my rivals. I was eager for the bravery of seeking, but untrained and unprepared for finding, or being found. I threw

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myself into quests without caring for the direction. I conjured grails to which I might pledge myself.

Love may not conquer all, but it has felled many young men. At the very point in my life when faith in Christ started to take root in my heart and mind and I was forced back upon myself, I fell in love with Juliana, a Jewish woman.

Make no mistake. There was nothing about Yale University in 1985 that made such a love difficult or even noteworthy. Our lives as students were full of common experiences and common aspirations, and in that bastion of American liberalism, one could easily imagine a Jew marrying a Christian—after all, religion is a “life-style choice,” is it not?

No less than eros, American liberalism has its own power. It is like a cultural neutron bomb: the structures of ethnic and religious culture are left standing, but they are emptied of life. Far more unlikely was a young Republican to marry a Women’s Studies major than a Christian a Jew. No, for us, the complications of love were of the universally personal sort. Both of us were in bondage to a desire that was driving us toward a renunciation of alternate possibilities: I shall be yours and no other’s. In our own ways we struggled against the strait-jacket, but we failed to escape the limitations of our own love, and we were joyful in our failure.

Lo ta’aseh l’kha fesel: You shall not make for yourself an idol.

After we decided to get married, we visited Rabbi James Ponet at the Yale Hillel. He told Juliana that, as one committed to Jewish law, he was obligated to say that what she wished to do was prohibited by God. “As a man,” he said, “I wish you the best of luck.”

Jim’s response was representative. Most contemporary rabbis live in the same pluralistic world as the rest of us. They accommodate and resist; they exercise pastoral discretion and stand firm where they can. For Jews, intermarriage is an issue of fundamental importance, and as we were to discover, there were very few rabbis—even fewer in the late 1980’s than today—who would marry Jews to Christians. We had no interest in seeking out one of the few, for we had no wish to live our religious lives on the edges of our traditions. Both of us were just beginning to seek the centers, to accept the confines of orthodoxy just as we were accepting the limitations of desire in marriage.

We decided that a neutral, secular wedding between Judaism and Christianity would be the worst possible way to be married, for we had no intention of having a neutral, secular marriage. The door to

the synagogue was barred, so my wife put herself and her family where they did not want to be: in front of the altar upon which Christians offer the sacrament of the sacrifice of Christ, surrounded by stained-glass windows of Jesus and his disciples. We were pronounced husband and wife in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The opposite of pallid neutrality is the real possibility of suffering. In the moment she became my wife Juliana endured the first blow of intermarriage.

Lo tissa et shem adonai elobekha la-shav: You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain.

We had no more interest in a neutral child than in a neutral wedding, and we certainly did not want to tear our children in two by pretending that we could raise them as both Jews and Christians. I remember the conversation well. “The children will, of course, be raised Jewish,” remarked Juliana one day. I looked at her and said with coldness, “What do you mean, raised Jewish? You do not go to synagogue. You do not keep kosher. I am not going to keep my children from baptism just so that they can be raised as bagels-and-*New-York-Times*-on-Saturday-morning Jews. If you become a religious Jew, then I am willing to promise that I will support you in raising the children as religious Jews.”

I made a promise I did not think I would need to keep, but I had underestimated my wife, or maybe God. That Saturday, she marched down the street to the Hillel *minyan*. She announced that we were buying new plates and would keep a kosher kitchen. She was willing to marry me in a church, but she was not willing to see her children baptized. The first blow had awakened her, and she saw that the way forward in her life with me would require seriousness about what it meant to be a Jew. Now I was to learn what it meant to be a resident alien in my own kitchen, an onlooker and supporter of her determined decision to burrow into the encompassing word of God’s commandments.

Zakhor et yom ha-shabbat l-kad’sho: Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Circumcision is a ruthlessly physical act. Waves of emotion swept over me as my eight-day-old son lay screaming and the rabbi recited the prayers and the doctor wielded his scalpel. My mind was utterly disordered by the visceral reality of the event. But one thought came, and it has so lodged itself in my memory that I am very nearly consumed by it to this day.

It was a thought of self-doubt, a worry about the invisibility of my own faith. How many times had I come to the altar of my church to receive the

bread and wine? How many times had I confessed my sins and received absolution? How many children had I seen baptized with water and anointed with oil? I could not count the times, and in each instance I felt the truth of Jesus' promise: I will be with you until the end of the age. He is with us, in our hearts and on our lips.

So I had come to believe, as my own path paralleled my wife's turn of deepened immersion in the religious life. And yet, there, in the sterile environment of an outpatient room at the hospital, I watched and saw God's word in the flash of the knife marking my son's flesh—so physical, so immediate, so shockingly intimate, so permanent. Christ was in my heart and on my lips, but was I unmarked in my flesh, unchanged in the brute reality of my life?

Kabed et avikha v'et imekha: Honor your father and your mother.

At the circumcision of my son, I felt the blow of intermarriage most fully, and it was more terrible than I could have imagined. It was the blow of judgment on my head. I do not mean guilt about anti-Semitism. For most American Christians, that is an easy guilt to bear, a guilt that makes one feel superior for being self-critical and progressive. No, this was a painful moment of self-recognition, for I now felt a question that I could not answer. Where had God's commandment set *me* apart and marked me as Christ's own? Did we—no, did I—make the commandments of God into empty ephemera, "spiritual" and pious commitments that the currents of culture eroded and obliterated the moment I left the church?

COMPASSION is a humane sentiment. To seek justice is a noble goal. "Peace on earth and goodwill toward men"—these were watchwords of the liberal institutions that had educated me, institutions with no particular commitment to Christianity. Haverford College, my undergraduate school before Yale, was a veritable monastery of "care and concern." Yale University was ever eager to strike the poses of social justice.

My daughter, however, could not eat cheeseburgers, and her friends found this remarkable. Her very mouth was trained and set apart, day by day. And me? Jesus teaches that what goes into the mouth is not important; what matters is what comes out. And yet what came out of my mouth seemed so generic, so easily molded into the progressive platitudes of our age.

I was afflicted with a singular worry. If Christianity—the faith of my forefathers and the basis of all my efforts to be faithful to God—was my inher-

itance, was it also the fuel for the neutron bomb of which American liberalism was but the trigger mechanism? Was a Christianity that accommodated interreligious marriage a religion that clothed indifference with the rhetorical dress of inclusion and tolerance?

Lo tir'tzah: You shall not murder.

A few years ago I decided to participate in a reading group at my wife's synagogue. The rabbi was to lead a discussion of *Halakbic Man* by Joseph B. Soloveitchik. I had never heard of Rabbi Soloveitchik (1903-1993), the great interpreter of Orthodox Judaism and especially of Jewish religious law (*halakha*), but I got the book and read it. It enthralled me—and not least because, ironically enough, Soloveitchik's description of the halakhic path of concretion seemed to me a beautiful and poetic evocation of the Christian belief in the incarnation.

"When the Holy One, blessed be He, descended on Mount Sinai," writes Soloveitchik,

He set an eternally binding precedent that it is God who descends to man, not man who ascends to God. When he said to Moses, "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8), He thereby revealed the awesome mystery that God contracts His divine presence in this world.

This vision of divine kenosis captivated me. "Halakhic man, with his unique mode of understanding, declares: the higher longs and pines for the lower." Yes, I said to myself as I read, a thousand times yes. My head was spinning with insight into how my wife's attempts to conform to halakhic requirements had been teaching me the truth of Philippians 2:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Juliana, I thought, was humbling her spiritual aspirations, even to the point of taking the food that entered her mouth as a matter of spiritual significance. Soloveitchik had drawn my attention to Ecclesiastes 12:11, and the nails that fasten divine wisdom to concrete reality. ("The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails . . . which are given by one shepherd.") She was nailing her spiritual journey to the concrete reality of life. And she was as St. Paul

speaking to me: "Let no one trouble me, for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body."

Yet, in these reveries of insight and convergence, the glistening knife of circumcision flashed and the blow was struck again.

Throughout his analysis, Soloveitchik juxtaposes the way of halakhic concretion with the spiritual quest of those who seek to transcend the world, those who wish to climb the ladder of being and kick it away when they reach the eternal. Soloveitchik sees how this spiritual quest creates a fissure in the religious life, one that turns all thought to the heavenly while leaving this world to its own devices: "let the dead bury the dead." In a rare moment, he allows himself to address Christianity directly, and reveals his worry about the spiritual consequences of a faith that is interested in circumcising the heart while leaving the body unmarked:

How many noblemen bowed down before the cross in a spirit of abject submission and self-denial, confessed their sins with scalding tears and bitter cries, and in the very same breath, as soon as they left the dim precincts of the cathedral, ordered that innocent people be cruelly slain?

IT WAS A LINE written in the early 1940's, as the Europe from which God had delivered Soloveitchik was consuming his community with a furious fire of murderous desire. How many noblemen, indeed? When I read that sentence I was overcome with the failures of Christianity. Did we imagine that Christ came to circumcise our hearts, only to leave our bodies free to indulge our lusts for power and domination?

I thought of my daughter and son. Their mother was training their hands not to mix milk with meat so that the will of the Lord might be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Hands so trained, I thought, would not so readily take up the sword to slay the innocent, even if their hearts burned with murderous desire. Their hands were being pierced with the nails of divine intention day after day. And my hands, what of them?

Lo tin'af: you shall not commit adultery.

Recently, my then-denomination, the Episcopal Church, has been in the news. We had ordained a gay bishop whose current partner, ex-wife, and daughter joined in the ceremony of consecration. As a so-called "conservative," I was asked to participate in a Canadian radio show to discuss the whole affair with some liberal proponents of the gay bishop's ordination.

The radio host made a good effort to address the issues, but, as with all media events, we traded sound bites and the segment ended. I left the studio and went out onto the street. In my mind's eye I was back at my son's circumcision. The day was warm, but I felt chilled. Had I been honest with myself about modern Christianity? Not only had my church rejected the need to mark the body with the knife of circumcision, it had rejected the very idea that God's commandments can shape or control how we use our bodies. Nothing needs to be submitted to God other than the fine sentiments of the heart.

I despaired of an invisible Christianity. Could this possibility be what St. Augustine imagined when he wrote, "Love, and do what you will"? I recalled Soloveitchik:

A subjective religiosity cannot endure. And all those tendencies to transform the religious act into pure subjectivity, negate all corporeality and all sensation from religious life, and admit man into a pure and abstract world, where there is neither eating nor drinking, but religious individuals sitting with their crowns on their heads and enjoying their own inner experiences, their own tempestuous, heaven-storming spirits, their own hidden longings and mysterious yearnings—will in the end prove null and void.

There, on the sidewalk, I offered a prayer of petition to God. You have come to us in the human flesh of the man Jesus of Nazareth, but we have insisted upon seeking to obey you without regard to our flesh. Forgive us, O Lord, for we have rendered your word null and void.

Lo tig'nov: you shall not steal. *Lo ta'aneh v'rei'akha eid sha'ker*: you shall not bear false witness. *Lo tab'mod*: you shall not covet.

NONE OF THESE memories is consciously with me as my daughter completes the tenth commandment and we sit down to hear the rest of her recitation of Exodus 20. My daughter is a beautiful, mature, well-spoken young lady. She is slipping from my grasp and into her own adulthood. I am proud of her and the awe of God's words mingles with my awe of her self-possession. Did I ever really hold her in the first place? From the moment my wife marched off to synagogue that first Saturday to lay the foundations for her daughter, to receive the foundation laid centuries before Rachel was even born, I was already letting her go.

Jesus teaches us that for his sake we must be able

to hate our mothers and fathers, our brothers and sisters. My daughter loves me very much, but she is very conscious that this day of her bat mitzvah is as a hating of her father. She was bitter about the fact that I could not be with her mother at her side as she entered into an intimate fellowship with God—to be His voice to His people through the reading of Torah. She was angry, and she cried about it in the months of preparation prior to the bat mitzvah, but neither the rabbi, nor her mother, nor I could give her what she wanted.

In fact, I did not want to give her what she wanted, for her desire was that obedience to God would not require the pain of renunciation, would not require the visible marks on our bodies, the visible, public mark of distance between me in the pews and her before the congregation. And now, she is before me. She is being ravished by the concentration necessary to chant the ancient Hebrew. She is being drawn near to God. I can only witness. I cannot be by her side to hold onto the hems of her garments as she rises upward with each flourish of the canticle of recitation.

My daughter is feeling the full blow of intermarriage. Why can't we all go together? Why can't all the people she loves journey toward the Lord, linked arm and arm? Why is God setting a daughter against her father? I know these are her thoughts, and because I love her so much, I feel her

anguish as the knife of circumcision cuts into her heart. She is entering into the narrow way of obedience and, for all the joy of that day and the rapture of her voice, into the very voice of the Ten Commandments, where I cannot join her.

My absence, which is forced upon her, is marking her. She knows I support her words with my spirit, even though I can understand none of them. But I cannot support her with my voice in the prayer before the reading. I cannot touch her gently before she reads. God is cutting me away from her as He had cut away my son's foreskin, not to harm or destroy or denigrate, but to sanctify her as a woman called to Him as a Jew, a Jew who is set apart from the nations into which I must, of necessity, recede.

As I recede and she is drawn away, I am basked in light, for she is aglow on this day. Adorned with dawn's dew of adulthood, she is radiant. She is a light to her father. Her voice continues to sing the ancient words. The sun's rays drape and illumine her. Her face shines. Cut away from me, she is turning to take up a pair of tongs. She is pulling out the living coals of the divine word. She is flying toward me. My son, sitting beside me, reaches for my hand. I feel the tears on my cheek, and the liquid fire of her voice touching the lips of my unclean heart. O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!

China Games

Arch Puddington

THE “Genocide Olympics” is what Mia Farrow has called the games scheduled to open next summer in Beijing. The actress has been protesting China’s role in facilitating the slaughter in Darfur, but her efforts have not exactly generated a groundswell of support (unless one counts a single tough letter to the Chinese leaders from the director Steven Spielberg, who was perhaps making amends for the embarrassment of having previously agreed to help choreograph the opening ceremonies of the games). Thus far, despite some cosmetic gestures, Chinese policy toward the brutal regime in Sudan remains fundamentally unchanged, and the 2008 Olympics remain on track.

Nor is the Sudanese nightmare the most pressing issue arising out of the prospective games. Why, one might ask, was the People’s Republic of China awarded sponsorship of the world’s premier sporting competition in the first place? After all, it is not the only modern dictatorship to have been so honored—two earlier instances were Nazi Germany in 1936 and the Soviet Union in 1980—and one might think that history had provided plenty of warning signs to anyone who cared about the condition of free athletic competition. One would be wrong.

THE 1936 Berlin games are chiefly remembered as “Hitler’s Olympics.” To be sure, Hitler had inherited them; the International

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Olympic Committee (IOC) had designated Berlin as the host city some years before the Nazi accession in 1933. But the German dictator was quick to recognize the value of this opportunity to showcase the ideal of Aryan superiority and the glories of the Nazi state. Becoming intimately involved in the preparations, Hitler made decisions on details ranging from ceremonial pageantry to stadium architecture to the appropriate display of Nazi uniforms and insignia.

He also made decisions concerning the tricky issue of the Olympics and the “Jewish problem.” Almost from their first day in power, the Nazis had begun issuing decrees designed to reduce the status of Jews from citizens to subjects, and thence to victims. German-Jewish athletes, even the most talented among them, were not exempt from oppression.

This posed a dilemma for the IOC. While some of its leaders were made uneasy by Nazi conduct, the organization’s consistent position was that a host country’s political system was a matter of no concern: the Olympic movement stood above politics. Thus, neither the general climate of militarism and thuggery in Germany nor the restrictive measures placed on Jews and on Jewish athletes ever led the IOC to consider a change of venue.

Still, the right of athletes to compete regardless of race, religion, or creed lay at the heart of the Olympic ideal, and the committee could not simply ignore the issue of whether Jews would be al-

lowed to participate on the German team. Questioned on this matter by the IOC, the Nazis invariably replied that any German citizen who met the qualifying standards would be permitted to take part. This was a lie, if one that IOC officials were happy to swallow. One of the German dictatorship's first actions had been to bar Jews from membership in sport clubs and the use of training facilities, effectively denying them an opportunity to enter the tryouts.

To the willful naïveté of some in the IOC must be added the rank anti-Semitism of others. "There are not a dozen Jews in the world of Olympic caliber" was the succinct formulation of one official, evidently basing himself on the canard that Jews were not an athletic people. Such instinctive antipathy was exacerbated within the IOC by the growing call for an American boycott of the Berlin Olympics.

Proponents of a boycott ranged across the religious and political spectrum. But to Avery Brundage, a leading American sports official who would eventually come to serve as IOC president, the boycott was an alien and un-American idea, part of a malevolent scheme to politicize the Olympics. "[C]ertain Jews," he warned, "had better understand that they cannot use these games as weapons in their boycott against the Nazis." As criticism of the IOC mounted, it sought a way to defuse the pressure by concocting what might be called the "one Jew" solution.

In a personal meeting with Hitler, Charles Sherrill, an American IOC representative, urged the addition of a single token Jew to the German team. Hitler adopted a variant of this proposal: Gretel Bergman, a world-class high-jumper, was invited to return home from exile in England to compete for a position. For as long as the boycott remained a threat, she was treated as a contender—only to be dropped when the movement collapsed in 1935. With the exception of a partly Jewish female fencer, the German team had no Jewish participants.

That still left open the racial composition of the American team, which did include a number of Jews. As it happens, the 1936 Olympics are remembered in large measure for the superb performance of America's black athletes, especially the sprinter Jesse Owens, who took home four gold medals. Certainly Hitler was repelled by the presence of blacks on the victory podium—he had privately expressed the wish that they be banned from the competition altogether—but this was one aspect he was unable to control.

Nevertheless, the Nazi dictator could only have been delighted by the results on the playing fields,

where German athletes racked up 33 gold medals, nine more than the second-place United States. With fascist Italy finishing third, and Britain and France lagging dismally behind, Hitler was not the only observer to conclude that the 1936 Olympics certified the decline of the democracies and the coming ascendancy of the Reich. Nor could he have been dissatisfied with the IOC's complicity in the outcome.

IF THE AWARD of the 1936 Olympics to Germany was tragedy, the IOC's decision to give the 1980 Olympics to the USSR was farce—of a particularly grisly kind. In 1974, when the decision was taken, Moscow was the nerve center of a global empire of cruelty that encompassed not only the vast territory of the Soviet Union but also the countries of Eastern Europe and a growing handful of outposts in the developing world. As recently as 1968, when the Red Army invaded Czechoslovakia, the Kremlin had made it clear that efforts to achieve a measure of freedom in its sphere of influence would be crushed by force. Though the mass arrests and executions of Stalin's terror had long since abated, dissident writers, intellectuals, and human-rights campaigners were still routinely being packed off to the Gulag.

In designating Moscow as the Olympic host, the IOC was thus repeating its error of the 1930's. It was also impugning its own athletic principles. Like their totalitarian brethren in Nazi Germany, the Soviets treated with contempt the IOC's cherished concept that sport should be independent of politics. To the Soviets, such independence was an ideological absurdity. They had long recognized the propaganda value of athletic prowess, and the Olympics represented just another skirmish in the international class struggle.

Like all other institutions in Communist society, organized athletics in the USSR were thoroughly controlled by the ruling Communist party. Over a period of decades, the State Committee on Physical Culture and Sport had established a powerful, officially financed juggernaut whose overarching purpose was to prove Soviet athletic superiority to the world. Accumulating gold medals in Olympic competition was one of its major points of focus. Since the Soviet model was duly copied by other Communist countries, international sports had evolved into two very different systems: a Western one that carefully preserved an athlete's status as an amateur and a Communist one in which athletes, amateurs in name only, were trained and treated as professionals.

Given the stakes as they saw them, it was no accident that the Soviets became notorious for flouting the basic rules of sport. At a moment when other countries were establishing testing regimens for performance-enhancing drugs like steroids, Moscow moved in the opposite direction, employing its state-run athletic and medical infrastructure to develop ever more powerful substances and ever more refined methods for eluding their detection. IOC officials, well aware of the practice, closed their eyes to it, as they did to the Soviet penchant for rigging results in other ways. In preceding Olympics and in a long string of other international competitions, the bias of judges from the Soviet Union and allied Communist states had become an open secret.

ONLY AN accident of timing prevented the Kremlin's success in securing the 1980 Olympics from being capped by an undiluted propaganda triumph. Toward the end of 1979, Communist rule in neighboring Afghanistan had begun to unravel, and in December the USSR marched in to rescue the situation. American passivity in the decade of détente, especially in evidence under Jimmy Carter, had led Moscow to conclude it could act with impunity. But a stunned Carter responded to the invasion with a package of sanctions whose most important item was a boycott of the forthcoming Moscow games.

Carter's boycott decision was met with a hailstorm of opposition, both by some in the U.S. who saw it as too weak and by many others who saw it as too strong. The IOC rejected out of hand a proposal to find an alternative venue for the games; echoing the pieties of his predecessors in the 1930's, the IOC president, Lord Killanin, grandly declared that "the Olympics should not be used for political purposes." Carter even found it difficult to persuade the U.S. Olympic Committee to adhere voluntarily to his policy; at one point, he was compelled to threaten legal sanctions if American athletes chose to defy him.

The boycott faced even greater opposition from America's allies abroad. In particular, the refusal of Europe to participate in it led many observers to conclude that Carter's initiative had failed. Indeed it had, in its own terms: the USSR did not withdraw from Afghanistan, and the games went on just as they had in Berlin in 1936. But now there was a difference: China, the USSR's bitter adversary, joined with the United States in staying away, and so did most of the Muslim world out of solidarity with the Islamic victims of Soviet aggression in Afghanistan.

In the end, the absence of some 40 to 50 countries, not to mention of American television networks, delivered a bruising blow to Soviet morale.

True, the USSR collected a huge number of gold medals. But if the Kremlin had hoped to present a global audience with the image of a confident, efficient, and forward-looking superpower, the Moscow games became linked instead to the invasion of a small and defenseless country. This time around, the IOC would seem to have been taught a clear and painful lesson about the cost of placing its faith in a dictatorship.

EVIDENTLY not, however. Although Jacques Rogge, the current chairman of the IOC, has at least tacitly acknowledged that next summer's host country is a closed society, he has predicted confidently that the games will "open up China." He also seems to be hoping that the People's Republic cannot meaningfully be compared with Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia.

About this he is right—up to a point. China today has peaceful relations with its neighbors (Taiwan partially excepted), boasts one of the world's most dynamic economies, and is a far freer place than it was in the heyday of Chairman Mao. A new and more politically aware middle class is emerging. To many observers, progress toward greater freedom is all but inevitable. The Olympics themselves, as the Bush administration contended in supporting Beijing's bid, could prove a "powerful but intangible incentive" for democratic change.

Unfortunately, China seems to have grasped from the outset of the selection process that its political system would not be an issue of overriding importance or stand as an insuperable obstacle to its Olympic plans. It had reason to think this. In 1993, a mere four years after the massacre in Tiananmen Square, China was only narrowly defeated in its attempt to gain the 2000 games.

During the run-up to the IOC decision in that earlier instance, the Chinese had maneuvered to soften their image by releasing several high-profile political prisoners. This time they did not bother. To the contrary: at the very moment when the IOC was entering its final deliberations, Beijing stepped up its persecution of both the Falun Gong religious sect and independent journalists.

As the Chinese may have foreseen, the IOC was far more preoccupied with Beijing's environmental deficiencies than with its repressive politics. There were fears that the heavy cloud of soot and smog that perpetually hangs over the capital city would weaken performance on the field and irritate spec-

tators. And here was an issue on which the Chinese were prepared to respond with alacrity.

As part of its formal bid, Beijing laid out an elaborate "action plan" to create "a new image of Beijing." This grand scheme centered on a drastic improvement in air quality, sweeping changes in the character of the city's neighborhoods, and major upgrades in its transportation system. Specific steps for accomplishing these goals were carefully spelled out. Some 200 high-pollution factories would be relocated to sites outside the city; "green zones" would be established throughout Beijing; the sand storms that regularly blow in during the summer would be reduced through a massive project to reverse soil erosion in surrounding regions; the subway system would be expanded to cut automobile exhaust fumes and traffic congestion; clean natural gas would replace dirty coal as the city's primary heating fuel.

We have already had some inkling as to how these undertakings are to be met—and at what human cost. In February 2001, during a visit to Beijing by an IOC inspection team, the Chinese authorities placed an ad-hoc moratorium on the use of coal to heat apartment buildings, producing a temporary improvement in air quality and no doubt impressing the IOC with China's ability to act decisively—while also leaving millions of residents without heat in the dead of winter.

This was but a prelude to more far-reaching and permanent measures to modernize Beijing, including especially the massive destruction of older housing. Already it is estimated that over a million residents have been forcibly evicted, with an undetermined percentage of them left homeless. Those subject to "relocation"—primarily the poor and migrant workers from the provinces—enjoy no right of appeal or protest concerning the level of compensation set by the state, and those who do object risk imprisonment. The displacement has taken place in an information vacuum, with virtually no coverage by the controlled domestic media and very little by the international press.

Like much else in post-Mao China, media censorship has been modernized to suit the needs of a country now extensively involved with the outside world. Editors of Chinese newspapers have been instructed to stress the social benefits that will accompany the Olympics, and to avoid anything that might raise questions about the price being paid by the Chinese people. This is the same system that has successfully suppressed news about the defective merchandise produced in China for both domestic and foreign consumption and the spread of conta-

gious agricultural and human diseases like SARS.

In dealing with the media, the authorities prefer to rely on a sophisticated regime of regulations designed to encourage self-censorship. But, when necessary, they are also prepared to use an iron fist. Today's China leads the world in the number of imprisoned journalists and the number of individuals charged with criminal offenses for "misusing" the Internet. Nor is it shy about intimidating foreign newsmen or native Chinese working for foreign outlets. Shortly after the IOC voted to approve Beijing's bid, the authorities arrested Zhao Yan, an employee of the *New York Times's* Beijing bureau, on charges of violating state secrets. The charges, later reduced to fraud, appeared to be baseless, and this September, after serving a full three-year sentence, he was released.

A major focus of Chinese concern has been the possibility of spontaneous or organized street demonstrations during the games themselves. Protests of this kind occurred prior to the Seoul games of 1988 and are widely regarded as having played a pivotal role in bringing about the collapse of South Korea's military dictatorship. The Chinese are determined to avoid even a hint of the Korean experience. In their Olympic action plan, they promised "tight but friendly and peaceful security measures"; since then, as a preemptive measure, they have instituted policies that are neither friendly nor peaceful. In line with the clear predilection of the regime for avoiding unseemly publicity, officials have increasingly made use of house arrests and detention without trial as a means of silencing dissidents who might otherwise be emboldened to air their grievances to the foreign press. At the same time, lengthy prison terms for expressing "subversive" views are far from uncommon.

The Chinese have also been developing a strategy to deflect or control potential protests by foreigners. China's intelligence services have launched an extensive information-gathering operation to pinpoint foreign organizations that might cause trouble during the games. "Trouble," of course, means peaceful picketing, demonstrations, marches, press conferences, and the like—the sorts of actions that are perfectly legal in democratic settings. The IOC, for its part, has already indicated where its sympathies lie; an official has described plans for citizen protests at the Olympics as "regrettable."

HOW WILL things play out? It is hard to know in advance. Some members of Congress, spurred on by Chinese dissidents, have begun calling for a Western boycott even as President Bush

has accepted an invitation to attend. Wherever such foreign factors might or might not lead, there is no escaping the fact that today's China is an exceptionally complicated society with subterranean currents that we can hardly discern. The Chinese authorities themselves might well be in the dark about what the Olympics finally portend and, as their recent clampdown suggests, may indeed have begun to fear adverse repercussions. In August, American newspapers were full of stories about a swine virus, the blue-ear pig disease, that had spread to 25 of China's 33 provinces, killing off a large fraction of one of the country's most important herds. Characteristically, the government kept its own public and the rest of the world officially unapprised of the nature and extent of the disease,

leaving it to private journalists and foreign sources to ferret out what they could.

If the past is any guide, it is the most sinister and shocking features of a dictatorship that are the likeliest to emerge when it hosts the Olympics. For Germany in 1936, it was anti-Semitism and militarism; for the Soviet Union in 1980, it was imperial aggression. Whatever happens in China in 2008, there is no evidence that democracy will be enhanced, human rights will be improved, or the suffering of the Chinese people will be alleviated. As for the International Olympic Committee, it seems to have learned little or nothing from its own past mistakes. In fact, with the news in July of the IOC's decision to award the 2014 winter games to Putin's Russia, it seems bent on repeating them.

Refighting the Wars of Religion

George Weigel

SINCE THE RISE of the religious New Right two generations ago, the religion-and-politics battle in America has been fought on many fronts. The most obvious one involves electoral politics, although even here the story is not so straightforward as often depicted. As Richard John Neuhaus showed two decades ago, the new activism of evangelical and fundamentalist Protestants in the 1970's did not begin as a political offensive intended to woo America from secular liberalism, let alone from the Democratic party. Instead it was a defensive reaction to attempts by the Carter administration to bring federal regulatory pressure to bear on religious schools, thereby threatening to inundate the enclaves that evangelicals and fundamentalists had created to escape the cultural meltdown of the 1960's.* Only in time did what started as self-defense—"leave us alone"—become a significant political movement promoting traditional morality in public life.

Viewed through a wider historical lens, the revolt of the evangelicals can also be seen as one episode in an ongoing struggle over the meaning of the religion clause of the First Amendment. For the first century and a half of the Republic, that clause had been a backwater of constitutional jurisprudence. This began to change with a series of Supreme Court decisions springing from the *Ever-*

son case in 1947. What struck many as an effort to drive confessional religion from the public square and to establish secularism as a quasi-official national creed provoked a challenge by religious intellectuals and activists representing a wide variety of theological and denominational positions; their arguments were buttressed by legal scholars, some of them devoutly secular in cast of mind.

Nor is that all. If the religion-and-politics wars have been about politics—including the politics of constitutional interpretation—they have also been about ideas. To claim a place for religious conviction in the public square is implicitly to challenge the "secularization hypothesis" propounded for decades by modern sociologists and historians—the idea, that is, that modernization *inevitably* leads to a dramatic decline in religious conviction and a weakening of the culture-forming effects of religion. Perhaps less obviously, it is also to challenge the secularist or Jacobin version of the Whig theory of history, according to which the evolution of Western democracy should be seen as a development away from religion, and against Christianity in particular.

All of these disparate strands have been involved in the latest phase of the religion-and-politics wars: the rise of what Christopher Hitchens has hailed as the "new atheism." The commercial success of Hitchens's *God Is Not Great*, following on the heels

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* "What the Fundamentalists Want," COMMENTARY, May 1985.

of similar books by Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*), Daniel Dennett (*Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*), and Sam Harris (*Letter to a Christian Nation*), may not have added very much to the sum total of our knowledge about either religion or the impact of religious conviction on our politics. But these best-sellers have kept both the polemical and the political pots boiling, and sharpened the question of what role—if any—religious conviction, or even religiously-informed moral argument, should play in American public life.

Now, into the fray, comes Mark Lilla, formerly of the University of Chicago's Committee on Social Thought, currently a professor of humanities at Columbia University. Lilla's *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West** was considered newsworthy enough to be given a late-August rollout via a cover story in the *New York Times Magazine*, and was quickly claimed by Hitchens (albeit with caveats) for the new-atheist camp. But Lilla's mind and style are of an entirely different caliber from the likes of Dawkins, Dennett, Harris, and Hitchens. His book is marked by impressive learning, as well as by a gift for translating some of the more stylistically-challenged philosophers (Hobbes, Kant, Hegel) into language accessible to the non-specialist.

This is not to say, however, that *The Stillborn God* is without flaws; quite the contrary. Indeed, the net effect of Lilla's effort at nuanced and sophisticated analysis, as Hitchens no doubt perceived, is to render aid and comfort to the more bellicose alarums of the new atheists. Nor could this have been lost on the editors of the *New York Times Magazine*, their gimlet eyes turned to the 2008 elections.

All the more reason, then, to welcome the publication of still another new book, *The Law of God: The Philosophical History of an Idea*, by the French historian of ideas Rémi Brague.[†] Traversing much of the same terrain as Lilla, Brague reaches dramatically different conclusions. He thus presents a serious challenge to Lilla's thesis, not to mention that of the new atheists and their cheerleaders. But let us take this in parts.

IN THE 17TH century, Lilla argues, "a Great Separation took place, severing Western political philosophy decisively from cosmology and theology. It remains the most distinctive feature of the modern West to this day." Lilla applauds this Great Separation, precisely because it removed what he calls "political theology"—defined as "discourse about political authority based on a revealed divine nexus"—from the discussion of human governance.

In Lilla's account, the evolution of relations between champions of divine authority and "secular" authorities, never exactly easy, had taken many a twist and turn even before the end of the Middle Ages. But in the 16th century, this ongoing tension would intersect fatally with a fierce battle among Western Christians themselves. The result was the European wars of religion, which more or less derailed the advance of European civilization for the better part of a century. Yet, on Lilla's reading, the bloodletting did have one positive consequence. By demonstrating the baleful real-world effects of "divinely revealed" ideas of governance, the European wars of religion triggered the Great Separation.

This severance was first effected intellectually by the English thinker Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). Lilla is an unabashed if not uncritical admirer of Hobbes. That in itself is something of a feat, for Hobbes is rather easy to dislike, what with his draconian view of the fear-driven human person and his preference for absolutism in politics (because only an all-powerful tyrant can control a society composed of fear-driven individuals). But Lilla tries to disentangle Hobbes's taste for the leviathan state from what he believes to be Hobbes's critical intellectual breakthrough. As he put it in his *Times Magazine* article:

Hobbes planted a seed, a thought that it might be possible to build legitimate political institutions without grounding them on divine revelation. He knew it was impossible to refute belief in divine revelation; the most one can hope for is to cast suspicion on prophets claiming to speak about politics in God's name. This new political thinking would no longer concern itself with God's politics; it would concentrate on men as believers in God and try to keep them from harming one another. It would set its sights lower than Christian political theology had, but secure what mattered most, which was peace.

If Hobbes thus created modern political philosophy, it was John Locke (1632-1704) who, Lilla argues, in effect "humanized" and sold this new product. Locke agreed with Hobbes on the necessity of changing the subject of politics from God to man. But he had a less dyspeptic view of the human condition, and he did not much like the idea of tyranny. So, Lilla writes, he

began to imagine a new kind of political order in which power would be limited, divided, and

* Knopf, 336 pp., \$26.00.

† Chicago, translated by Lydia G. Cochrane, 365 pp., \$35.00.

widely shared; in which those in power at one moment would relinquish it peacefully at another, without fear of retribution; in which public law would govern relations among citizens and institutions; in which many different religions would be allowed to flourish, free from state interference; and in which individuals would have inalienable rights to protect them from government and their fellows.

This "liberal-democratic order," Lilla continues, is "the only one we in the West recognize as legitimate today." And thus we in the West are the political heirs of the "good" Hobbes: the Hobbes who, by demolishing "the Christian conception of man" and by completing "the most devastating attack on Christian political theology ever undertaken," enabled post-Hobbesian moderns to "escape" from their intellectually barren, socially disruptive, and ultimately lethal theological patrimony. With help from the kinder, gentler John Locke, Hobbes made possible democracy, the rule of law, the constitutional defense of human rights, and religious freedom.

OF COURSE, as Lilla stipulates, all did not continue to go smoothly. Although Hobbes's historic changing-of-the-subject might have been expected to settle matters, the French romantic philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) intervened to set in motion what became a nasty intellectual mess. Rousseau shared Hobbes's caustic criticism of clerical ignorance and theocratic authoritarianism; but, Lilla notes, he was also a "friend of religion." And thus, rather than bracketing the human religious impulse when the subject turned to public life and politics, he insisted, in his romantic way, on honoring it. Even more consequentially, Rousseau identified this seemingly ineradicable impulse with an "inner light" that shapes our moral intuitions, including our moral intuitions about society, our obligations to others, our philanthropy, and indeed every other aspect of our lives as citizens.

True, Rousseau conceded, some religion was bad. But that was "priestly" religion (read: Catholicism), and it could be controlled and contained. Meanwhile, as the Savoyard vicar puts it in Rousseau's *Emile* (a novel that Lilla explicates at some length): "I believe all particular religions are good when one serves God usefully in them."

And so the religious camel's nose was, once again, under the flap of the political tent. Both Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) followed Rousseau rather than Hobbes. The former, while attempting

to salvage universal and rationally defensible principles of morality by appeals to a "categorical imperative," also argued for a kind of universalized Protestantism as the apex of human religious development. The latter took an even more dangerous turn by promoting religious conviction as the vital core of any authentic *Volksgeist* (national spirit or "idea"). Where *that* could lead was demonstrated when the liberal Protestant theology of the 19th-century German academy so thoroughly identified itself with the Wilhelmine *Volksgeist* that it vigorously defended German aggression in World War I and, almost until the very end, the slaughter in the trenches: a civilizational catastrophe far worse than, if weirdly reminiscent of, the earlier wars of religion.

Nor was that the end of it, as Lilla does not fail to point out. The liberal Protestant cave-in to Prussian militarism and German nationalism in turn triggered a messianic or apocalyptic reaction among religious thinkers in the interwar period—a period deeply marked, Lilla reminds us, by a thoroughgoing disgust with modernity and a new quest for authenticity among many European intellectuals. Some, like the Jewish thinkers Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, and the Christian theologians Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, pulled up on the reins before they came to the political brink. But others soon found a vessel for their fantasies in the man whom Winston Churchill once described as "a maniac of ferocious genius, the repository and expression of the most virulent hatreds that have ever corroded the human breast—Corporal Hitler."

This whole sorry history, Lilla concludes, "served to confirm Hobbes's iron law: messianic theology eventually breeds messianic politics." The Great Separation, to which we owe our very lives as the beneficiaries of liberal democracy, can never be taken for granted; and neither can the liberal-democratic order itself. Lilla formulates the task before us in terms different from those proposed by the new atheists but tacitly in tune with their agenda:

Rousseau was on to something: we seem to be theotropic creatures, yearning to connect our mundane lives, in some way, to the beyond. That urge can be suppressed, new habits learned, but the challenge of political theology will never fully disappear as long as the urge to connect survives.

So we are heirs to the Great Separation only if we wish to be, if we make a conscious effort to separate basic principles of political legiti-

macy from divine revelation. . . . This means vigilance, but even more it means self-awareness. We must never forget that there was nothing inevitable about our Great Separation, that it was and remains an experiment.

THUS, MARK LILLA's critique of political theology and definition of a political philosophy capable of sustaining liberal democracy. In *The Law of God*, Rémi Brague, a scholar of Plato, Aristotle, and medieval Jewish and Islamic philosophy who divides his time between the Sorbonne and the University of Munich, agrees with Lilla to this extent: contemporary thinking on religion and politics is "dominated" by "one of the grand narratives in which modernity tries to explain itself: an escape of the political from the domain of theology." This master narrative, in turn, contains several sub-plots: "the secularization of a world supposed to have been 'enchanted'; the laicization of a supposedly clerical society; the separation of church and state, supposed to have been originally one."

But none of this, Brague argues, holds up under close examination. The "divine right of kings" had "barely been formulated before the 17th century," and is thus a modern and not a medieval idea. The "laicization" of politics, which is another way of describing what Lilla calls the Great Separation, masks a conceptual confusion, for "lay" is not a secular but a Christian notion, indeed a liberal notion, originally meant to describe man as possessed of a dignity that makes him capable of citizenship. As for the term "secularization," it "hints at what it is supposed to explain, namely, that there exists something like a 'secular' domain distinct from the religious domain."

Brague hardly denies that there have been, are, and always will be "disturbing" issues involved in "the divine's claim to strike the field of the political with full force." But rather than approach those issues by means of a quarantine—preemptively refusing theology any encounter with political thinking—Brague prefers to speak (a little awkwardly) of a "theoi-political" problem: the problem of the intersection of the divine, however construed, with our ideas about the right ordering of society. That problem is an enduring feature of the human condition, and one that has been extensively addressed by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam over the past three millennia or more.

There is no room here to do justice to the intellectual richness of Brague's narrative, or to honor the breadth of his research. His survey of classical, biblical, Christian, talmudic, Byzantine, and Islamic efforts to deal with the "theoi-political problem"

occupies several engaging chapters. In the course of these, Brague introduces us to the natural-law tradition that Christianity borrowed from the Greeks: a way of thinking and arguing based on rational moral analysis that, at its best, can serve as a kind of general public grammar and vocabulary through which peoples of diverse religious convictions (and no religious convictions) can debate how we ought to live together. He also illustrates some of the deep theological and philosophical reasons, among them the lack of such a tradition, why Muslims have had difficulty finding Islamic warrants for what we would now call "pluralism" and "civil society." In his discussion of the High Middle Ages, Brague adduces both important Jewish thinkers (Yehuda Halevi and Maimonides) and a Christian approach to the religion-and-politics question stressing that law, even divine law, must be both rational and intelligible.

Brague's paladin here is Thomas Aquinas. For Aquinas, the divine law cannot be understood as something utterly external to man and to the human experience; nor is divine law to be construed primarily as a matter of a restraint on human freedom. To the contrary, as Brague writes, "Thomas considers the law [including revealed law] to be a gift of God to a rational and free creature. . . . [Law is] the way we act when in full possession of our freedom." Nothing in Aquinas, Brague insists, supports the "divine right of kings," for kings, too, are subject to a divine law aimed at "liberating reason and permitting it to be itself."

Thus in Aquinas—and in sharp contrast to that other Thomas, Hobbes—there is no zero-sum game between God and man, between revelation and reason, between faith and politics. Moreover, Aquinas's concept of law and human freedom challenges subsequent late-medieval philosophers who emphasized the centrality of will—God's will, and our own—in understanding the moral life. Two of those philosophers, Duns Scotus and William of Ockham, as if anticipating modern legal positivism and the post-modern apotheosis of the autonomous self, turned Aquinas inside out and upside down; in their work, "the divine law was understood above all as the expression of the will of God imposed on things already created, and no longer as the impression of divine wisdom on the very nature of the created." Substitute "the leviathan state" for "God" in this formula, and suddenly Hobbes looks less like a brilliantly innovative thinker responding to the awfulness of the European wars of religion and more like the heir of an unfortunate tendency in one stream of Christian thought.

LIKE MARK LILLA, Rémi Brague is concerned about the fragility of our present political arrangements, about the protection of basic human rights, and about the future of the rule of law, democratically deliberated. But he will not concede that an effective defense of the Western democratic project requires the canonization of Thomas Hobbes and his Great Separation. Indeed, he points out that we might well wonder “whether that separation, which has received so much praise, . . . ever actually took place,” if for no other reason than that the “two institutions . . . never formed a unit.” Brague writes:

The political and the religious are two independent sources of authority; they have crossed one another’s paths more than once, but they never have merged in spite of efforts to fit them together, sometimes to the advantage of one, sometimes to that of the other. Although there has been cooperation between the two, there has never been confusion about which is which.

And if Brague parts company with Lilla on historical grounds, he also parts company on theological and anthropological grounds. Lilla and Brague have very different ideas of God and His revelation, and very different ideas of us; and in each case, the ideas are inextricably intertwined. Lilla urges unending vigilance in public life against the religious fevers that still inflame and infect our minds. Brague, at the end of *The Law of God*, suggests the conditions for a more modest approach to the “theoi-political problem”:

In the Bible and in Christianity . . . the presence of the divine does not comport an immediate demand for obedience. . . . The divine shows itself, or rather gives itself, before asking anything of us and *instead* of asking. . . . Although God does indeed *expect* something of his creatures (that we develop according to our own logic), He does not, in fact, *demand* anything, or rather, He asks nothing more than His gift already asks, thanks to the simple fact that it is given: [namely,] to be received. In the case of man, that reception does not require anything but humanity.

In *The Stillborn God*, Mark Lilla asks many of the right questions about religious experience and its effect on public life. His demolition of the fatuities of 19th-century liberal Protestantism (admittedly a fat target) is masterful. And he raises an appropriate caution-flag to the more exuberant secularists, like Christopher Hitchens, when he writes that the

story of political theology “is the transcript of an argument conducted over four centuries by serious men who understood what was at stake in their quarrel and offered reasons for their positions.”

Yet reading Lilla in tandem with Rémi Brague suggests forcefully just how much of that “transcript” has been left out of or underplayed in Lilla’s own account. Among the historical and philosophical sins of omission and commission highlighted by Brague’s telling of the tale are Lilla’s insistence that “Christian political theology” inevitably leads to tyranny and despotism; his false picture of medieval Christendom, which completely bypasses the rich social pluralism of the Middle Ages; his failure to grasp how the Catholic Church’s successful insistence on the freedom to order its internal life according to its own criteria (as, for example, in the famous “investiture controversy” that pitted Pope Gregory VII against the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV) created essential historical conditions for the possibility of such pluralism; and his misplaced insistence on the wars of religion as having been exclusively theological, whereas they in fact had a lot to do with political ambitions, economic interests, and the bloody birth-pains attendant on the emergence of the modern nation-state.

By widening the historical lens, Brague also reminds us that the Western accomplishment of distinguishing in both theory and practice between religious authority and political authority, *sacerdotium* and *regnum*, was in fact a Christian accomplishment, which in turn drew on ancient Jewish convictions about the dangers inherent in the idolatry of the political. Without question, both the European wars of religion and the Enlightenment played crucial roles in creating the modern political forms by which we acknowledge the distinction between religious and political authority. But the arguments for such a distinction had been made long before, and in explicitly theological terms, by Augustine, Aquinas, and many others standing in the biblical tradition.*

* This may be the place to note another large lacuna in *The Stillborn God*. Toward the beginning of the book, Lilla observes that “readers will notice the absence of modern Catholic thinkers from this study. . . . Telling the Catholic story would require another book.” But writing any part of the history of the Western debate over religion and politics without a serious wrestling with Catholic sources is a bit like writing the history of baseball without mentioning the National League. Perhaps the greatest challenge this presents to Lilla’s Hobbes-centered thesis is this: modern Catholic social doctrine, from the late-19th century to the present, provides a powerful argument on behalf of pluralism, religious freedom, civility, tolerance, and the rule of law, and is marked by a notable modesty in applying divine warrants to prudential judgments. All this, without any Great Separation and its unsustainable sundering of human life and human consciousness.

AND TODAY? Lilla's *The Stillborn God* avoids direct commentary on the present state of the religion-and-politics argument in America, which is sure to be a factor in the 2008 campaign. But Lilla was not so reticent in the *New York Times Magazine* summary of his book, and in what amounted to a throwaway line he showed rather more of his political hand. Acknowledging the "utterly exceptional" fact that, in America, deep differences over a host of bitterly contested issues are settled peaceably and legally, he attributes this exceptionalism to the happy combination of "a strong constitutional structure and various lucky breaks." Evidently it is the latter that most impress him. "It's a miracle," he concludes.

But it is not a miracle, and it never was. It was, and is, an accomplishment. And no matter how we weigh the various influences—some manifestly secular, others clearly religious—that shaped the religion clause of the First Amendment and the culture that crafted it, accepted it, and lived its provisions, it is a simple demographic fact that respect for religious freedom and commitment to religious toleration are, in the main, a religious accomplishment in the United States today. How could it be otherwise, given the vibrant, confusing, sometimes maddening, but impossible-to-ignore religiosity of the American people? Can Lilla really believe that the social, cultural, and moral consensus that keeps America from reprising the wars of religion is based on a national fondness for Thomas Hobbes?

The overwhelming majority of Americans accept the truly great separation—not the separation of religion and public life but the separation of religious authority and political authority—because they believe themselves religiously obliged to do so, and because enough remains of the old natural-law grammar and vocabulary for us to conduct the debate over the "oughts" of public life in a genuinely ecumenical and interreligious fashion, rather than by playing denominational trump cards or by claiming direct guidance from divine revelation.

There is another issue here that Lilla's "miracle" does not encompass and his book does not address. That is the issue of *how* we defend what is ours, and what is right. By what warrant, today, do we defend the American commitment to religious freedom,

civility in public life, and tolerance of those with whom we disagree? Through the pragmatic or utilitarian argument that it is just less messy to be tolerant and civil? That will not hold up for long under pressure; moreover, it risks making perilous concessions to those, like the Islamists of Europe, who would help themselves to the benefits of Western tolerance in pursuit of intolerant ends.* Then by a tacit agreement, perhaps to be enforced by the Supreme Court, that religiously-grounded public moral argument is out of bounds in the public square? That may work in certain Manhattan zip codes, but not in most of America, where any such maneuver would rightly be regarded as profoundly undemocratic.

However ironic it may seem to Lilla, Protestant evangelicals and fundamentalists who believe that God wants them to be tolerant of, and civil to, people who have a different idea, or no idea, of what God wants have a thicker, personally more demanding, and publicly more resilient set of arguments in defense of religious freedom and the civil society than do the pragmatists and utilitarians. So do those Catholics who take seriously the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and Pope John Paul II that religious freedom is the first of human rights—a claim the Catholic Church argues on genuinely public, not sectarian, grounds. There is no miracle here. But there is political theology at work, and at work in defense of the democratic common good.

Mark Lilla wants his Hobbes without the English philosopher's dark view of man. Rémi Brague, I suspect, knows that there is no such thing as Hobbes Lite, and that so thoroughly grim a view of the human condition runs the very real risk of underwriting an ignoble and ultimately vicious politics. There is a sense, then, in which the debate over religion and politics is a tale of two Thomases, Hobbes and Aquinas, with their deeply divergent views of human nature and the human prospect, and thus of politics and its pitfalls and its possibilities. One cannot imagine a more consequential debate for the future of democratic freedom in America, throughout the West, or in the intellectual and cultural struggle between the West and its enemies.

* See my article, "Europe's Two Culture Wars," in COMMENTARY, May 2006.

ART

Hopper's Appeal

Steven C. Munson

MORE THAN the usual array of celebratory and publicity-oriented activities has attended *Edward Hopper*, a major retrospective of the painter's work now on view until January 21 at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.* A documentary film narrated by the actor (and collector) Steve Martin is being shown at all three of the exhibition's venues as well as on PBS. At the National Gallery, a series of jazz concerts in September was devoted to the music of Hopper's era. In early November, the museum has scheduled an "Edward Hopper Family Weekend," the highlight of which is the performance of a new play titled *Who's in the Hopper? An Art Mystery Adventure*. In December, in conjunction with the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center and the University of Maryland School of Music, the museum will stage *Later the Same Evening*, an opera inspired by five Hopper paintings.

And those are just the big events. Also accompanying the show is a special program for elementary-

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school children as well as a DVD, a website, a special restaurant menu, and the familiar audio tours and lectures by museum officials and curators.

All of this is meant, presumably, to reinforce in the public mind the image of an already popular artist whose reputation was made in the 1920's and 1930's and has remained intact ever since. Indeed, time has only enhanced Hopper's standing as a significant 20th-century American painter, not least because he has proved to be one of the most susceptible of commercial exploitation. The number of people who have seen the advertising imagery based on what may be his most famous work, *Nighthawks* (1942), must far exceed the number who have actually laid eyes on the picture itself. Such promotion has probably done as much as anything to help make Hopper the widely recognized and highly regarded figure he is today, four decades after his death.

THE SON OF a successful dry-goods merchant, Edward Hopper was born in 1882 into comfortable middle-class prosperity in Nyack, New York. Early on he developed a seri-

ous interest in drawing and painting, an interest encouraged by his mother who provided books and magazines of drawing instruction as well as art supplies. By 1899, after graduating from high school, he knew what he wanted his vocation to be.

Since his parents were concerned that he be able to make a living, Hopper enrolled at first in the New York School of Illustrating, a training ground for commercial artists. But a year later he found his way to the New York School of Art. There he stayed until 1906, studying under William Merritt Chase and then, far more importantly, under Robert Henri. It was around Henri that a group of American realist painters coalesced—among them George Bellows and John Sloan—who came to be known as the Ashcan School. Their goal was an art expressive of the often coarse realities of urban life, in contrast with the more refined approach to realism of, say, John Singer Sargent.

In 1906, Hopper took the first of

* The exhibit opened at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts (May 6-August 19) and will be at the Art Institute of Chicago (February 16-May 11, 2008).

three trips to Europe (the others coming in 1909 and 1910), but the modernist revolution then under way seems to have had no discernible influence on his art. After returning to America, he made some paintings based on his stays in Paris; but, as one account puts it, their failure to attract any attention "threw him back to working on the American subjects with which his reputation is now associated." Supporting himself by working as an illustrator several days a week, Hopper exhibited one painting at the Armory Show in New York in 1913—a landmark event that brought modern European and American painting to the attention of the public for the first time. But it was not until a decade later, after taking up printmaking and watercolor in a sustained way, that he put himself on the path to commercial and critical success as an artist.

IN LATE 1923, Hopper submitted a half-dozen watercolors of houses in Gloucester, Massachusetts, to an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum. They received favorable reviews. According to the catalogue of the current show, one critic praised Hopper

for carrying on the "vital and simple manner" of Winslow Homer. . . . Hopper, . . . she wrote, "believes in the authority of big simple forms over the effect attained by brilliant brushwork," valuing directness over dash and the plainspoken over the picturesque.

This is as good a description of Hopper's overall aesthetic approach as one is likely to find anywhere.

The catalogue also quotes Hopper himself to the effect that, after he began etching, "his paintings began to crystallize." Marriage to another former art student, Jo Nevison, with whom he renewed his acquaintance in 1923, also seems to have been a catalyst of success. In 1924, his second solo show, at the

Rehn Gallery in New York, sold out. A year later, he painted *The House by the Railroad*, in which he attained the first full expression of the sensibility that was to guide his painting for the rest of his career: a sensibility attuned to the anomie of modern life as he encountered it in 20th-century American society.

Nighthawks, a depiction of four solitary individuals at the counter of an all-night corner coffee shop, has become emblematic of that sensibility, and is among the 48 paintings on display at the National Gallery, along with some 30 watercolors and a dozen prints. According to the chief curator, the selections for the exhibition were carefully made to show Hopper at his best. The forthrightness of this statement is to be commended, for it implicitly concedes that not all of Hopper's output is worthy of a major retrospective.

What, then, can be said of those works deemed to represent his highest achievement?

The first thing is that, as more than one critic has remarked, Hopper was not actually a very good painter. He himself admitted to his limitations as a colorist (you might say he was a prisoner of local color). Moreover, as one of the catalogue essayists points out, he "never fully developed into an accomplished portraitist," a judgment more than confirmed by the two self-portraits in the show.

One notices a fundamental problem with Hopper's art right away: he never really mastered the art of drawing, and as a result never learned how to compose a picture with any real sense of the aesthetics involved in rendering an image in relation to other images in a composition. Nor, more essentially, did he ever fully develop a knack for conveying what might be called the inner life of things as opposed to their superficial appearance.

Typically, in his work, things that are supposed to move—most obviously, leaves or waves—are devoid of any feeling of movement, being

rendered in such a manner that they actually seem solid or frozen. By the same token, he did not score much greater success with people's bodies, having a particularly tough time trying to place the human figure convincingly within a pictorial space. One of the catalogue essayists observes that Hopper "was never truly comfortable with his sitters, especially his female subjects"—after their marriage, he used his wife almost exclusively as a model—and there is ample evidence of this in the show.

In *Automat* (1927), for example, the legs of the young woman seated alone in a café appear somehow detached from the rest of her body. In *Morning in a City* (1944), the nude woman standing in her bedroom—or rather looming over it—is completely out of whack, spatially speaking, with the rest of the picture. (Her ankles and feet are not depicted, but if one imagines where they would be in relation to the plane represented by the floor, she is apparently standing on an unseen box.) Almost everything about *Apartment Houses* (1923) seems to work on some level, except the amusingly amateurish figure of the woman seen, voyeuristically, through the window from the perspective of a nearby building. This painting, like *Summer Interior* (1909), which depicts a half-clothed young woman sitting on the floor and resting her arm on a bed, is faintly redolent of Degas, just as *New York Restaurant* (ca. 1922) and *Tables for Ladies* (1930) have about them a whiff of Manet; but Hopper's line is too underdeveloped and insensitive, and his compositional instincts too crude, to put him in the same league as the two French masters whom he admired.

AND YET, though that underdeveloped line has more in common with the line of the illustrator or graphic artist that Hopper trained to become, it has also been elevated to something far more substantial and

effective by the sheer will of the artist. In Hopper's painting, the lack of aesthetic refinement, while often capable of inducing a cringe, does serve the blunt purpose of his own brand of realism, which entailed a sort of dogged literalism that precluded much in the way of artistic experimentation. Indeed, the rigidity of his work is one of its most striking features, which is why the word "tableau" has often been used to describe his compositions. It is exactly the right word if what we mean by it is, as Webster's defines it, "a depiction of a scene usually presented on a stage by silent and motionless costumed participants."

In this regard, it is worth recalling the assessment made of Hopper's art in 1946 by the critic Clement Greenberg:

A special category of art should be devised for the kind of thing Hopper does. He is not a painter in the full sense; his means are second-hand, shabby, and impersonal. But his rudimentary sense of composition is sufficient for a message that conveys an insight into the present nature of American life for which there is no parallel in our literature, though that insight itself is literary.* Hopper's painting is essentially photography, and it is literary in the way that the best photography is. Like Walker Evans's and Weegee's art, it triumphs over inadequacies of the physical medium; and the main difference between them is that while Evans's and Weegee's subjects do not give them time enough to calculate focus and exposure, Hopper simply happens to be a bad painter. But if he were a better painter, he would, most likely, not be so superior an artist.

The photographic quality of Hopper's work to which Greenberg refers—both its stagey composition and the sense it conveys of capturing and freezing a personally meaningful moment in time—no doubt results in part from his own absorption of cinematic influences (the

catalogue reports that he "spent an inordinate amount of time at the cinema," and was particularly affected by the style of the gangster films of the 1930's). It is a quality evident in the National Gallery show; indeed, when viewed from a certain distance, a few of the prints on display actually appear to be photographs. Yet whence, considering his weaknesses as a painter, does what Greenberg called his superiority as an artist derive?

I WOULD NAME four aspects of his art.

First, his pictures, even the less successful among them, often have an arresting geometry, an achievement all the more remarkable in light of Hopper's awkward sense of composition. There are many examples of this in the show, including the three tiers of horizontal lines that delineate a row of apartment windows above storefronts set back from a slice of street and sidewalk in *Early Sunday Morning* (1930); the pattern created by the three adjoining windows in *Room in Brooklyn* (1932); the repetition of the forms of empty seats, theater boxes, and curtains in *Two on the Aisle* (1927); and the quirky rhythms of the angled rooftops of houses in paintings like *Captain Upton's House* (1927) and *The Lighthouse at Two Lights* (1929) and in such watercolors as *Burly Cobb's House* (1930) and *Marshall's House* (1932).

What makes the arrangement of lines and shapes so arresting is the second key aspect of Hopper's art: his depiction of light, especially sunlight, and its effects in creating shadows. This never achieves the subtlety or warmth of, say, the light of the Impressionists, or, to take a different example, the richness of light in a Corot. Hopper's light is generally cold, clear, and stark; nevertheless, it is wedded to his angular forms, which are usually generated out of distinct masses of color, in a way that creates an oddly compelling and at times even lovely result.

One example is the small section on the center-left side of the canvas in *Hodgkin's House* (1928), which is as beautifully executed as anything in the show. Other such notable passages—regarded in isolation, they take on a highly abstract quality—include the window in the wall of the restaurant in the upper-left corner of *Chop Suey* (1929), the light falling on the wall behind the filing cabinet and desk in *Office at Night* (1940), the broken light in *Sun in an Empty Room* (1963), and the doorway behind the dejected seated man in *Sunday* (1926).

Here, too, there is something undeniably remarkable. It is one of the qualities that make Hopper's art an ideal subject of study by others, since there is so much to be learned from it about the kinds of successes and failures a painter has to deal with in struggling to find an effective and suitable means for expressing what he has to say. One artist who was both influenced and inspired by Hopper—and who became a wonderful painter—was the late Richard Diebenkorn, who in his career worked in both a representational and an abstract manner. His response to Hopper's landscapes and urban scenes is recorded in the catalogue to this show; they "just seemed made for me," Diebenkorn said—"the use of light and shade and the atmosphere . . . saturated with mood, and its kind of austerity."

WHICH BRINGS us to a third important quality of Hopper's art, one to which the others contribute: its peculiarly uneasy yet somehow alluring ambience, the "atmosphere . . . saturated with mood" that so impressed Diebenkorn. Why does it exert such a fascination on the viewer? The fields of alienation had been

* Although Greenberg did not see it, I would say there was a literary parallel to Hopper's art in the novels of Theodore Dreiser, a famously "bad writer." *Sister Carrie* (1900), in particular, foreshadowed many of the major social changes that were to occur in America in the course of the 20th century, as well as the atomizing consequences of those changes.

plowed by others—Edvard Munch and the German Expressionists come to mind—and often with stunning pictorial results. The appeal of a Hopper is quite different. What is it, for example, about the empty, lonely nighttime space of the street in *Drug Store* (1927), one of Hopper's better pictures yet one that appears unprepossessing, that makes this painting in some way almost irresistible?

One critic put his finger on the issue when he wrote that Hopper's popularity is somewhat puzzling since his work "is 'accessible' only in the sense that his paintings are unambiguously representational. They are also bleak, private, and unsettling, all to a degree one would scarcely expect in so well-liked an artist."

If Hopper's appeal is, as this critic suggests, somewhat counter-intuitive, a clue to its source may be found in what seems an unlikely place: Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Here is Twain catching his young hero in a dejected mood:

Tom sulked in a corner and exalted his woes. . . . And such a luxury to him was this petting of his sorrows, that he could not bear to have any worldly cheeriness or any grating delight intrude upon it; it was too sacred for such contact; and so presently, when his cousin Mary danced in, all alive with the joy of seeing home again after an age-long vis-

it of one week to the country, he got up and moved in clouds and darkness out at one door as she brought song and sunshine in at the other.

Mark Twain not only understood the profound consolation a person can find in extreme sadness, but identified this comfort as something sacred, which also seems an apt word to use in characterizing Hopper's own attitude toward the feelings of loneliness and alienation he represents in his paintings. It is hard to think of a mental image that better captures the mood of Hopper's gloomy, colorful pictures than that of a simultaneous transition of "clouds and darkness" and "song and sunshine," of two separate yet mutually connected modes of feeling. Indeed, the underlying pull of his art could be said to derive from its being a kind of visual equivalent of "a petting of one's sorrows," a psychological process that seems to exert a universal appeal.*

And that leads to the fourth quality that accounts for why, despite his obvious flaws as a painter, people like and are drawn to Hopper's work. This is his choice of subject matter. Whether dimly or acutely, the things that pervade his art—the isolated houses on the shore, the isolated people in restaurants, hotel rooms, theaters, and other public facilities, the isolated streets—often evoke, when they are encountered

in real life, a sense of timeless sadness. Hence they are ideally suited to an art that itself seeks to convey, to borrow another Twain phrase, a "dismal felicity."

These images of Hopper's have in turn acquired, as many critics have said, "iconic" status. This is certainly due in part to the fact that they will forever be associated with a particular, and particularly meaningful, time and place in the imagination of Americans; but it is also due, it seems to me, to their more broadly attractive quality of being, intrinsically, depressing. And like Twain, who takes the weight off the emotional state of dejection by locating it in the experience of a ten-year-old ragamuffin, Hopper takes something of the sting out of being alienated by making it seem so utterly conventional.

Looked at in this light, Hopper's popular appeal may ultimately be said to rest both on the public's forgiving eye and on our deeply felt need, or desire, for emotional and spiritual reassurance. It may even be fair to say that the aesthetic discomfort induced by the things that make Hopper a "bad painter" is in some sense a necessary component of that which makes him a superior artist.

* "God has not created anything more beautiful than sorrow," wrote the Iranian poet Forough Farrokhzad in another variation on this idea; "the pleasure and the intoxication that are hidden in sorrow are more valuable than all the happiness of the world."

MUSIC

The Amateur as Critic

Terry Teachout

OF ALL THE changes that have taken place in English-language newspapers during the past quarter-century, perhaps the most far-reaching has been the inexorable decline in the scope and seriousness of their arts coverage. Not only have many newspapers done away with their book-review sections, but several major papers, including the *Chicago Sun-Times* and the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, no longer employ full-time classical-music critics. Even those papers that continue to review fine-arts events are devoting less space to them, while the “think pieces” on cultural subjects that once graced the pages of big-city Sunday papers are becoming a thing of the past.

It is, I suspect, difficult to the point of impossibility for the average reader under the age of forty to imagine a time when high-quality arts criticism could be found in most big-city newspapers. Yet a considerable number of the most significant

collections of criticism published in the 20th century, including Virgil Thomson’s *The Musical Scene* (1945), Edwin Denby’s *Looking at the Dance* (1949), Kenneth Tynan’s *Curtains* (1961), and Hilton Kramer’s *The Age of the Avant-Garde* (1973) consisted in large part of newspaper reviews. To read such books today is to marvel at the fact that their erudite contents were once deemed suitable for publication in general-circulation dailies.

We are even farther removed from the discursive newspaper reviews published in England between the turn of the 20th century and the eve of World War II, at a time when newsprint was dirt-cheap and stylish arts criticism was considered an ornament to the publications in which it appeared. In those far-off days, it was taken for granted that the critics of major papers would write in detail and at length about the events they covered.* Theirs was a serious business, and even those reviewers who wore their learning lightly, like George Bernard Shaw and Ernest Newman, could be trusted to know what they were about. These men (for they were all men) believed in journalism as a calling, and were

proud to be published in the daily press. “So few authors have brains enough or literary gift enough to keep their own end up in journalism,” Newman wrote, “that I am tempted to define ‘journalism’ as ‘a term of contempt applied by writers who are not read to writers who are.’”

Why, then, are virtually all of these critics forgotten? Neville Cardus, who wrote for the *Manchester Guardian* from 1917 until shortly before his death in 1975, is now known solely as a writer of essays on the game of cricket. During his lifetime, though, he was also one of England’s foremost classical-music critics, a stylist so widely admired that his *Autobiography* (1947) became a best-seller. He was knighted in 1967, the first music critic to be so honored. Yet only one of his books is now in print, and his vast body of writings on music is unknown save to specialists. How is it possible that so celebrated a critic should have slipped into near-total obscurity?

* Prior to World War II, English newspapers routinely published thousand-word concert reviews. Today, a typical *New York Times* concert review runs between 400 and 500 words.

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IN A BETTER-REGULATED world, Cardus's *Autobiography* would be ranked alongside H.L. Mencken's *Newspaper Days* and A.J. Liebling's *Between Meals* as a minor classic of journalistic reminiscence, one in which the time-honored story of the poor boy made good is told with splendid wit and urbanity:

I have sold, as well as written for, newspapers. My parents conducted a home laundry; or, not to be tautological, they took in washing. I once delivered the washing to the home and house of the chairman of the Hallé Concerts Society,* delivered it in a perambulator at the tradesmen's entrance. Years afterward I dined with him one night; I was now music critic of the *Manchester Guardian*, and he wished to placate my pen on a point of musical policy.

This is, alas, not entirely reliable, for Cardus loved a good story too much to tell his own without adding embroidery. Yet the unadorned truth, as Christopher Brookes revealed in *His Own Man*, a 1985 biography of Cardus, would have been impressive enough in its own right. Though Cardus, who was born in Manchester in 1889, exaggerated his early poverty, he was in fact the illegitimate son of a part-time prostitute, and it appears to be no less true that he completed only four years of formal schooling. If his childhood was not quite Dickensian in its deprivations, it was still a working-class life of the sort well known to those familiar with the bleak annals of Victorian history.

That such a boy should have grown up to become a music critic for the *Guardian* is one of the more improbable occurrences in journalistic history—though it is still less probable that he should have started out as the *Guardian*'s cricket correspondent, and continued to cover the game even after he took over the paper's classical-music beat. Indeed, it was as a writer on cricket that Cardus would always be most familiar to the public at large, eventually be-

coming so well known in that capacity that he was written up in *Time* in 1949. To the extent that he is remembered today, it is for such collections of his cricket dispatches as the posthumously published *Cardus on Cricket* (1977), the only one of his books to remain in print.

A self-taught writer who earned his youthful keep as a public-school cricket pro, Cardus talked his way onto the staff of the *Guardian* at a time when that paper prided itself not only on its reflexively liberal moralizing but on its extensive coverage of the arts. Within two years, he had become the *Guardian*'s chief cricket writer, but music was his first love, and from 1927 on he doubled as its chief music critic, reviewing concerts as "N.C." in an elaborately Edwardian style identical to the one he employed as "Cricketer."[†]

IN BOTH ROLES, Cardus was primarily interested in colorful personalities. He wrote about such musicians as Sir Thomas Beecham, his favorite conductor, in much the same way that he wrote about great cricketers, sketching their characters with a fluent blend of impressionistic description and polished anecdotalism that not infrequently sounded too neat to be quite true.

Here, for instance, is Cardus's version of a dinner with Beecham at the Salzburg Festival:

In a corner of the restaurant a little string orchestra was playing music—no tin-can stuff, but soft waltzes; and a number of elegant personages were dancing. "God!" ejaculated Beecham, "stop that noise!" He called for the *maître d'hôtel*. "How can I demonstrate to my learned friend here, the beauties of Schubert's music if that damned strumming goes on perpetually? Please have it silenced."

Perhaps it happened just like that, perhaps not, but as the Italians say, if it isn't true it ought to be. And when Cardus described a concert with the same impressionistic gusto, one felt inclined to say the same

thing, for it was his great gift to convey the essence of a musician in phrases so vivid that the near-complete absence of technical specificity almost always goes unregretted (if not unnoticed). When he writes that Arturo Toscanini's conducting of Brahms sounds like "a sort of gigantic musical wheel revolving in a ruthless groove," or that Fritz Kreisler's violin playing "reminds me of a beautiful face that would be even more beautiful if it were lined or wrinkled," you take his point at once, and relate it effortlessly to your own memories of the performer in question.

No doubt, Cardus wrote that way not only because he could but because he had to. His musical training consisted of a year's worth of voice lessons, and the flipness with which he dismissed "score-reading critics" leads the attentive reader to suspect that his own abilities in that line were severely limited. But there were few limits to his responsiveness to the music and musicians he loved, and when he was on form, it was easy to go along with the admiring self-appraisal in his *Autobiography*:

From the moment I gave up executive ability in music, I was free to cultivate the art of listening—which is an art *sui generis*. . . . For the critic of music should be the most enlightened and unprejudiced listener; it is his job, his full-time job, to hear and to receive music with a highly sensitized mind, governed by psychological and aesthetic insight. He is an artist with experiences in music his material.

HAD CARDUS taken the trouble to be born a quarter-century earlier, he would been the perfect music critic, Bernard Shaw's only peer, and it is possible that his work would be as well remembered today as are the

* The Hallé, founded in 1858 by the pianist-conductor Charles Hallé, is Manchester's professional orchestra.

† The *Guardian*, like most English newspapers, did not yet allow its writers to sign their work with their real names.

concert reviews Shaw wrote in the 1890's.

But Cardus was a romantic *pur sang* who with few exceptions cared only for the music of the late-18th and 19th centuries.* Unfortunately, his chief period of critical activity coincided with the emergence of the modern movement in music, about which he too often wrote with the complacent incomprehension of a philistine—an attitude that was widely shared in England between the wars. When Béla Bartók gave the English premiere of his Second Piano Concerto, Cardus wrote in the *Guardian* that “Bartók composes as though he owed the world of music a grudge. . . . The piano snaps away like a spiteful maiden aunt. It is tedious and crude.” Even a work as accessible as George Gershwin's *An American in Paris* provoked him to suggest “a 150-percent tariff against this sort of American dry-goods.”

Where Cardus shone, by contrast, was in his responsiveness to the long-unfashionable music of the late Romantics. He was one of the first English critics to recognize that Mahler was a major composer and to crusade for the acceptance of his work, just as he consistently held that Elgar deserved to be taken as seriously as Richard Strauss, and that his music was complex to a degree unappreciated by younger musicians who dismissed it as quaint:

For all his Continental accents and gestures, Elgar is English and Edwardian, unmistakably English of his period, but—and here is the subtle point—with a curious and contradictory side to him. At times he turns his vision inward to a fugitive realm of fancy, reflective, poetic, and sometimes of a sinister or inimical order or taint.

But that was as far as he was willing to go. Even a modern piece as approachable as William Walton's First Symphony seemed to him marred by its “insistent rhythm and harmonic emphasis, with an obvious disinclination to be easeful, quiet, and simple,” while the best he

could say about Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*, perhaps the greatest opera of the post-World War II era, was that it had “moments of genius.” For him, the rest of the 20th century was a closed book.

Because Cardus's tastes were so conservative, few took him seriously when he attacked the hermetic modernism of such avant-garde composers as Pierre Boulez in language that now seems prescient: “Listening to *Pli Selon Pli*, I could not relate the varied succession of aural phenomena to music as my musical intelligence and senses recognize music.” By then a lifetime of reaction had exhausted his credibility, and little attention was paid to his later reviews for the *Guardian*, whose increasingly unsympathetic editors were disinclined to give him the space he had once taken for granted. “Last week,” he lamented to a friend in 1969, “they cut my notice of the Hallé, in the Festival Hall, in half with no attempt to see what might be taken out here and there. No; the notice was chopped into two, like a butcher cutting a weekend joint.”

IS THERE ANY chance that Cardus's criticism will enjoy a posthumous revival? The prospect seems remote. Journalistic tastes had changed long before his death, and postmodern readers have little use for the richly upholstered Vicwardian prose in which he specialized. Moreover, the amateur tradition in music criticism has been in headlong retreat ever since Virgil Thomson first showed the readers of the *New York Herald Tribune* that a trained musician could write about music every bit as stylishly as a professional journalist. As a result, today's classical-music critics are expected to have precisely the kind of technical training that Cardus's generation disdained.

Still, it is just possible that a well-edited collection of his concert reviews might succeed in bringing him to the attention of a new generation of readers unaccustomed to the kind of critic capable of remarking that “I hope I have never written of music

except as one who is constantly bowing the head before the miracle of it.”† For all his good humor, Cardus took music as seriously as that sentence suggests, and believed passionately in its power and significance. Moreover, he also believed that the only way to write about it meaningfully was as a reflection of the working of man's soul:

I do not find music “abstract,” a series of propositions; an elusive Thing in Itself. Music is for me all the composers who have created it; a symphony is as much a part of Beethoven as the voice and mind and heart and humors of my best living mortal friend. . . . When we listen to music, if we listen properly, we take part in a communion; we taste the body of genius, enter into the mind of the man.

Needless to say, such an essentially romantic view is no more in vogue today than the old-fashioned prose in which it is couched. Yet something vital disappears from criticism when its practitioners are unwilling to approach music in this way—the same something that is palpably present when Neville Cardus remarks, as he did in a 1935 review, that Sir Thomas Beecham “expels plainness. The merely respectable and competent perish in his presence.” If this be romanticism, let us have much more of it.

* Late in life he appeared on the BBC series *Desert Island Discs*, whose guests chose the recordings they would take with them to a desert island. His picks were Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, Beethoven's Fourth Symphony, Schubert's “Unfinished,” the Prelude and Liebestod from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony*, and Richard Strauss's *Four Last Songs*.

† Part of the problem is that only a few dozen of Cardus's 2,000-odd *Guardian* pieces about music have been collected in book form. *The Delights of Music: A Critic's Choice* (1966) is a slender volume consisting mainly of concert reviews from the late 30's. *Talking of Music* (1957) contains longer essays written in the 50's. *Cardus on Music: A Centenary Collection* (1988) is a poorly edited selection of reviews and essays that focuses on composers at the expense of performers, steering completely clear of Cardus's modern-music reviews.

Books in Review

Academic Protocols

The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy

by John J. Mearsheimer and
Stephen M. Walt

Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 496 pp. \$26.00

Reviewed by
Bret Stephens

JOHN J. MEARSHEIMER is a professor of political science at the University of Chicago and co-director of the university's program on international-security policy. Stephen M. Walt is a professor of international affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, where he was formerly dean. Both men are prominent and highly respected theorists of the "realist" school of international relations, and both have published widely in some of the most reputable journals and newspapers in America.

That is in part why, when "The

BRET STEPHENS is a member of the editorial board of the *Wall Street Journal* and the author of the paper's "Global View," a weekly column.

Israel Lobby" first saw light in March 2006 as a long article in the *London Review of Books*, it caused a worldwide sensation—and why its charges were taken with the utmost seriousness by gleeful admirers and shocked detractors alike. It is also why, in devoting a starred review to this expanded and somewhat revised version of the article, *Publishers Weekly* singled out "the authors' academic credentials" and the "meticulous documentation with which they support their claims" as reason to take it, too, with the utmost seriousness.

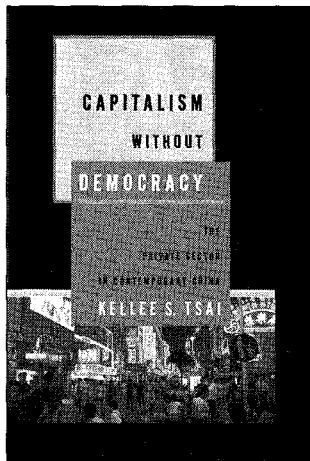
In short, much of *The Israel Lobby's* authority derives from its authors' résumés. And something similar can be said of the book's effect, and particularly of the damage it has caused by throwing a mantle of academic legitimacy over some of the most disreputable ideas ever to infect political discourse. Before even considering Mearsheimer and Walt's argument, such as it is, these extrinsic factors of credentials and reputation need to be acknowledged.

As for that argument, *The Israel Lobby* makes the case, briefly, that American support for Israel is not only wildly and irrationally excessive

but has increasingly become a strategic liability; that it can no longer be justified on moral grounds; that it has led the U.S. into one catastrophic misadventure in Iraq and may soon lead it into further misadventures against Syria and Iran; and—what is key—that it has been sustained only by the strenuous and sometimes bullying exertions of a "loose coalition" of pro-Israel interest groups and individuals, which in turn are often coordinated with the Israeli government.

TO BE SURE, the charge that Jews use their cunning, their financial and media muscle, their behind-the-scenes influence in the halls of government, and their web of international contacts to manipulate the powers-that-be for their own advantage has been around for a very long time. The belief that Israel is itself a miscreant state, often hostile to U.S. strategic interests, goes back to Eisenhower's administration, if not to Truman's. The view that America's terrorism problem owes in large part to its support for Israel has been argued by everyone from the reactionary polemicist Patrick J. Buchanan to the radical professor

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Noam Chomsky. The suggestion that Israel and pro-Israel groups and individuals explain the Bush administration's decision to go to war in Iraq got its first airing at least five years ago from such people as the Democratic Congressman Jim Moran and the *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd. Ditto for the notion that Israel is all that stands between better U.S. relations with Islamic regimes.

Say what you will about the thesis of *The Israel Lobby*, then, original it is not. But old arguments are not necessarily bad ones. Nor is it quite fair to say that just because a certain argument resonates with crackpots, it is itself a crackpot argument. (In their book, the authors are at pains to distance themselves from unsavory endorsements like the one offered by the former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke, who hailed their original essay as "a great step forward.") Precisely because it has issued from two respected establishment figures, and comes cloaked in a tone of academic reasonableness, *The Israel Lobby* and its claims have been subjected to exceptionally close scrutiny over the last year-and-a-half by any number of careful analysts and researchers. What their collective labors have demonstrated beyond any doubt is that behind the authors' conclusions lies a farrago of shoddy or non-existent scholarship and rank intellectual dishonesty.

In a review, it is not possible to do much more than point to a few symptomatic particulars that will have to stand for much of the whole. For example: writing on Israel's allegedly systematic violations of human rights and its "dwindling moral case" for American sympathy, Mearsheimer and Walt assert that, in the Six-Day war of 1967, Israeli soldiers murdered "hundreds of Egyptian prisoners of war." The claim is made *en passant*, asserted casually as an uncontroverted fact. In a footnote, an Israeli journalist named Gaby Bron is cited as the main source.

Years ago, however, the same Gaby Bron, who had been a soldier in the 1967 war, told the historian Michael Oren that the story of this alleged massacre was completely false. "The 150 POW's were not shot, and there were no mass murders," said Bron. "In fact, we helped the prisoners, gave them water, and in most cases just sent them in the direction of the [Suez] Canal" (see Oren's "Unfriendly Fire," the *New Republic*, July 23, 2001).

One charge of atrocity, one fallacious footnote to support it. Now consider the challenge for a reader or reviewer who must wade through not just *The Israel Lobby*'s 355 pages of text but its no fewer than 1,399 footnotes, many of which contain references to multiple sources. The opportunities for intellectual mischief are staggering, and Mearsheimer and Walt rarely miss a chance to take them. Amid the blizzard of detail, however, one thing stands out: the complete absence of original scholarship. Scarcely any primary source materials cited; no first-hand interviews; no hint that either Mearsheimer or Walt ever bothered to visit Israel during the course of their researches or so much as spoke to an actual member of the "lobby" against which they level heavy charges of working at cross-purposes with vital U.S. interests. How many readers will notice this travesty of academic standards? Their number does not include the well-placed reviewer who assured American book buyers of the "meticulous documentation with which [the authors] support their claims."

To take another example: regarding the Camp David negotiations of July 2000, Mearsheimer and Walt contend that the terms offered to the Palestinian strongman Yasir Arafat by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak were "far from generous." They refer their readers to a later statement by Israel's then-foreign minister, Shlomo Ben-Ami: "If I were a Palestinian I would have re-

jected Camp David as well." Corroboration of their claim? Not quite. Ben-Ami's accompanying observation—namely, that Arafat "was morally, psychologically, physically incapable of accepting the moral legitimacy of a Jewish state, regardless of its borders or whatever"—has been artfully omitted.

Again, in an effort to nail down their assertion of a "widely recognized" connection between Israeli interests and the U.S. war in Iraq, Mearsheimer and Walt recruit a March 2003 column from the *New York Times* in which Bill Keller (now the paper's executive editor) wrote: "The idea that this war is about Israel is persistent and more widely held than you might think." Elided is the contradictory fact that Keller went on to characterize this idea—their idea—as a "sinister narrative," adding: "[T]he longstanding Bushite animosity toward Iraq is . . . hardly a secret, and the fact that our interests coincide with Israel's does not mean that a Zionist fifth column has hijacked the President's brain."

AND SO FORTH. Instances in which Mearsheimer and Walt present claims that are either wholly unsubstantiated or blatantly contradicted by a reading of the sources they themselves cite in their footnotes multiply in dizzying profusion. It is no doubt for this reason among others that Benny Morris, a controversial Israeli historian on whose scholarship and credentials Mearsheimer and Walt heavily rely, wrote of their original essay that were it "an actual person, I would have to say that he did not have a single honest bone in his body."

True, the authors are on somewhat safer ground with some of their other sources. But what sources those are! In addition to Noam Chomsky, one finds respectful appeals in *The Israel Lobby* to the work of Norman Finkelstein, a Jewish supporter of Hizballah, as well as to the revisionist "historian" Ilan

Pappé, the hysterically anti-Israel *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, and the radical online newsletter *Counterpunch*.

Where, moreover, the likes of the Brookings Institution and the Washington Institute for Near East Policy are dismissed by Mearsheimer and Walt as lapdogs of the Israel lobby, these other disseminators of supposedly more objective information escape identification as voices from the far Left or the lunatic fringe. The resulting "history" of the Middle East reads as if a Korean scholar, with no English at his command, were to pen an account of the United States based mainly on the translated works of the discredited and disbarred professor Ward Churchill, the leftist anti-American Howard Zinn, and the radical black poet and agitator Amiri Baraka.

WHEN *The Israel Lobby* first appeared in essay form, some astute critics assailed it as a vulgar conspiracy theory that bore striking resemblance to anti-Semitic tracts of yore (see Gabriel Schoenfeld's "Dual Loyalty and the 'Israel Lobby'" in the November 2006 COMMENTARY). Mearsheimer and Walt did not help their cause by consistently capitalizing, to creepy effect, the "L" in "lobby," or by providing fright subheadings like "Manipulating the Media." In their book, "lobby" has now been lowercased, and in place of "Manipulating the Media" we have the elaborately pious disclaimer that "it is . . . wrong—and objectionable—to argue that Jews or pro-Israel forces 'control' the media and what they say about Israel." In one especially oleaginous passage, the authors say that "using the term 'Israel lobby' is itself somewhat misleading," and that a better term might be the "pro-Israel community" or the "help-Israel movement."

So why does the title of the book remain *The Israel Lobby*? Because a "lobby," in the sense not of some grassroots democratic movement

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but of a cabal of privileged insiders operating from the top down, is precisely what Mearsheimer and Walt have in mind. They devote page after page to cataloguing the alphabet soup of pro-Israel groups, from AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) to the ZOA (Zionist Organization of America). They offer multiple quotations attesting to the alleged power of this lobby, some of them flattering self-appraisals by AIPAC staff members, others disgruntled complaints from various Senators and Congressmen. ("The bottom line," they write, "is that AIPAC has an almost unchallenged hold"—in the original, the word was "stranglehold"—"on Congress.") They walk solemnly past the political tombstones of high officials supposedly felled by the Israel lobby. In their final chapters, a shopworn recitation of how the lobby sent the Bush administration

rushing to war first in Iraq and soon, perhaps, in Iran and Syria, they rely heavily on allegations that the President took his counsel not from senior advisers but from second- or third-tier "neoconservatives"—translation: pro-Israel Jews—and from columnists and pundits like Charles Krauthammer.

Combined with the authors' excuse for scholarship, this de-centered view of reality raises the question of whether our two realists have any clue whatsoever as to the nature of the actual threat facing either Israel or the United States in the era now upon us. If they do, they have successfully hidden it. Thus, on the one hand, they go out of their way to downplay or disavow the motivating factor of genocidal anti-Semitism in the worldview of radical Islam. On the other hand, their whole argument is geared toward insinuating (sundry disclaimers

notwithstanding) that not Islamist but *Jewish* behavior, "objectively" considered, is the major menace to the peace of the world.

In support of their sweeping contention that "the United States has a terrorism problem in good part because it has long been so supportive of Israel," Mearsheimer and Walt note that Sayyid Qutb, the spiritual godfather of al Qaeda (whom they quaintly label an "Egyptian dissident") was "hostile to the United States both because he saw it as a corrupt and licentious society *and also because of U.S. support for Israel*" (emphasis added). Leave aside the inconvenient fact that Qutb was executed by Nasser in 1966, *before* the U.S. became Israel's primary patron. In any case, his real objection was not to Zionism or Israel. Rather, it was to Jews themselves, and the "objection" to which he gave contemporary voice dated at least as far back as 7th-century Medina, where the Jews of the day tangled with Muhammad.

Unadorned and unqualified hatred of Jews—Zionist, non-Zionist, anti-Zionist, or otherwise—still pervades the worldview not just of al Qaeda or the Muslim Brotherhood but of much of the proverbial Arab street. "Everything will be on our side against Jews on [Judgment Day]," intoned the Islamist televangelist Yusuf al Qaradawi, probably the single most widely recognized cleric in Sunni Islam, in February 2006. "At that time, even the stones and the trees will speak, with or without words, and say, 'O servant of Allah, O Muslim, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.'" Muslim opposition to Zionism has many causes, but the fact that Israel is a *Jewish* state is major among them. As far as radical Muslims are concerned, the only way Israel will ever really cease to be an irritant is for Israel to cease to exist.

But—and here we come to the second part of the authors' two-step—neither is Israel or Zionism the gravamen of al Qaeda's case

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against the West and particularly the United States. This is a point that Mearsheimer and Walt seem almost to recognize before rapidly backing away from it. "[S]ome Islamic radicals," they grudgingly concede, "are genuinely upset by what they regard as the West's materialism and venality, its alleged 'theft' of Arab oil, the support for corrupt Arab monarchies, its repeated military interventions in the region, etc."

True enough—so true, indeed, that the authors cannot afford to leave it at that, hastily adding that these same radicals "are also angered by U.S. support for Israel." For if it is the case that Osama bin Laden is "genuinely upset" (!) over *our* sins against Islam, why should Mearsheimer and Walt's principal prescription for palliating this discontent be to cut back or sever our ties with *Israel*? Why not press for cutting our ties to the Saudi royal family, or voluntarily paying more taxes on oil, or devoting ourselves wholeheartedly to improving America's moral tone so as to lessen the offense to bin Laden family values?

Ah, but none of those would lead us back, always back, to Israel and its American "lobby."

ALAS, POOR Mearsheimer and Walt. They seem utterly perplexed that, when images of bombed-out Israeli cafes and buses air on the evening news, most Americans conclude that, in the war against terror and tyranny, we and Israel are on the same side. To ordinary Americans, moreover, such a response seems the essence of realism itself, as well as the expression of a longstanding, deeply felt, and entirely salutary consensus. What need for manipulation by unseen forces when the simple truth, well formulated by former New Hampshire Senator Warren Rudman, is that friends of Israel have "a pretty good product to sell," and that this "product" is neither fake nor fabricated nor ersatz but a country whose democratic history and daily tribulations resonate in a

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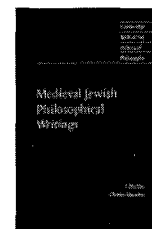
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compelling way with a whole variety of American audiences: Jewish and Gentile, religious and secular, liberal and conservative?

To anyone who knows anything about Americans, this resonance is hardly a mystery, and need hardly be spelled out. And yet, neither can it be taken for granted—as witness the (partial) success of Mearsheimer and Walt's noisome thesis on university campuses, in elite journals and book-reviewing media, and in certain precincts of the foreign-policy establishment. It is true that even in such places this new book of theirs has come in for a measure of criticism, sparked largely, it would seem, by collegial embarrassment over the no-longer-to-be-blinked rottenness of their scholarship. But they have also retained the sympathy of many of their critics, who, even as they permit themselves to wonder in print about what could have impelled two such even-tempered thinkers to undertake so patently specious a project, dance delicately away from the question of their motives.

Writing about this book in, respectively, the *New Yorker* and the *New York Times Book Review*, David Remnick and Leslie Gelb come separately to the same theory. Like themselves, and like other concerned American citizens, they speculate, Mearsheimer and Walt must have been driven to distraction by the heinous, catastrophic, and seemingly unstoppable mayhem being committed in the Middle East by the incumbent President of the United States. It was in seeking systematically to explain this raging folly that they then regrettably—but, in the circumstances, forgivably—lost their wonted sense of balance and slipped into conspiracy-mongering.

Aside from being almost farcical—patronizing, this speculation merely begs the question of why, with all the conspiracy theories that political scientists have at their disposal at any given moment, Mearsheimer and Walt should have

alighted on this one. But that is a question to which the answer may finally have to be sought in modes of investigative analysis beyond the routinely political.

Campaign Mode

Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World

By Bill Clinton

Knopf, 240 pp., \$24.95

Reviewed By
Leslie Lenkowsky

UNLESS HE returns as a presidential spouse, and perhaps even if he does, Bill Clinton seems intent on making his own post-White House career known for its efforts to encourage charitable giving. This is not a new interest for the former President. While in office, he created a government agency to foster volunteering and hosted a conference on philanthropy. Since leaving the White House, he has co-chaired (with his predecessor, George H.W. Bush) drives that have raised millions of dollars for victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, and presided over invitation-only meetings at which he asks philanthropists and businessmen to make public commitments of large amounts of time and money for a host of "global initiatives."

In his new best-seller, *Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World*, Clinton explains what he is doing and encourages others to join him. In example after example of what he considers model efforts at charity, the former President con-

trasts such selfless "giving," of the kind he now enjoys as a philanthropist, with the "getting business" of politics, in which nothing is given without expecting something in return. And many of the examples in *Giving* do certainly display a true spirit of generosity.

Clinton tells, for example, the story of Oseola McCarty, a Mississippi washerwoman who saved enough to endow a \$150,000 university scholarship fund. He describes the charitable work of celebrities like Oprah Winfrey and the tennis star Andre Agassi as well as that of ordinary people like the two Minnesota sixth-graders who raised \$24,000 to help schoolchildren in New Orleans. Nor does he overlook such faith-based programs as Operation Christmas Child, a project undertaken by a Christian organization headed by Billy Graham's son Franklin that over fourteen years in more than 125 countries has donated some 50 million boxes of toys, school supplies, and hygiene products.

AS INSPIRING as these stories are, however, they are not the principal thrust of *Giving*, or for that matter of the former President's own philanthropic work. Instead, Clinton devotes a large part of the book to urging his readers to become engaged in a different kind of selfless activity: lobbying business and government to achieve "the public good."

A personal case in point is the "Clinton Development Initiative," a kind of privately sponsored foreign-aid program directed at producing "national growth strategies" in Africa by improving health care, education, and agriculture. Through his own foundation, Clinton writes, he and his associates have also been trying to persuade drug companies to lower the price of AIDS treatments, as well as to promote the spread of environmentally correct architecture and technology. He commends longtime political activists like Amory Lovins, a champi-

LESLIE LENKOWSKY is professor of public affairs and philanthropic studies at Indiana University.

on of wind power and other forms of supposedly sustainable energy, and Al Gore, his former vice president, for combating global warming.

Although Clinton does not acknowledge it, this kind of philanthropy is not exactly new. In recent decades, many foundations and wealthy individuals have underwritten similarly ambitious programs. Attempts at transforming urban schooling, developing new energy policies, and overhauling health-care systems dot the records of innumerable nonprofit groups.

But the record of accomplishment is far from unmixing. Some initiatives—one thinks of the “Green Revolution,” a foundation-supported effort to develop heartier strains of grain and other crops for famine-prone regions—have done well. But most have had slim results at best, and some have done outright harm, such as an ill-conceived Ford Foundation effort in the 1960’s to foster community control of New York City’s schools.

If Clinton is aware of this record, he does not show it. Nor does he offer any real reasons to think that the programs he himself touts—most of which are indeed relatively new—will do better than the failed efforts of the past. As economic and social planners long ago found out, the world has a way of resisting grand designs dreamed up by smart people with ample resources, and the needy do not always cooperate with those who seek to help them.

Nor does Clinton acknowledge that his ideas on how to do good may not be everyone’s. Although *Giving* describes charter schools and other efforts to help children do better academically, it pointedly disregards the large number of donors who have supported vouchers and scholarships to aid inner-city students escape from failing public schools. While he extols programs he and others have started to assist welfare mothers enter the work force, he overlooks groups seeking to reduce illegitimate births or

strengthen families. And even as he writes passionately about projects aimed at fostering reconciliation among warring parties in Africa and elsewhere, he is silent about attempts to promote civil liberties or create democratic institutions that might have a significantly greater bearing on these countries’ long-term success.

IN A SHORT BOOK, some omissions are inevitable. But in *Giving*, the projects Clinton ignores are invariably those that break with the kinds of remedies long espoused by liberal politicians. To the former President, as indeed to many in philanthropy, changing the world involves only leftward turns—toward more restrictions on business and private life, toward a more active government, toward more forms of special treatment for favored groups, and toward more “dialogue” as the key

to resolving conflict in international affairs.

The fact that these approaches have often proved wanting, and that they have lost political traction in recent years, may help to explain Clinton’s interest in having wealthy benefactors step in. By promoting philanthropic efforts to realize specifically liberal goals, he is in effect seeking to convey the impression that these programs are not in fact political but rather beyond politics, simply the kinds of efforts that all compassionate people should embrace.

To judge by the former President’s success in portraying himself as a world-class giver, and in enlisting foundations and others to join in, his strategy seems to be working. But whether championed by politicians or philanthropists, misguided ideas are still misguided ideas. Insofar as donors devote more of their

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Howard Ball

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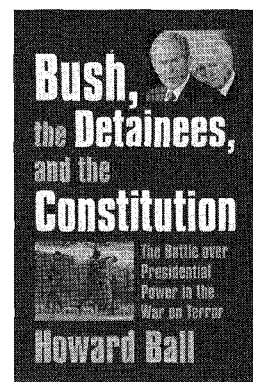
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time and money to backing them, traditional expressions of generosity will suffer, and so will those who might really benefit from scholarships, libraries, and clinics

In the end, much of what Clinton writes about under the rubric of "giving" turns out to be not much more than his (and his wife's) familiar agenda under another name. In this sense, even as he professes to have eschewed politics in favor of philanthropy, he has not really left his old line of work after all.

Exile

The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit: My Family's Exodus from Old Cairo to the New World

by Lucette Lagnado

Ecco. 352 pp. \$25.95

Reviewed by
Hillel Halkin

LUCETTE LAGNADO was seven years old when her family—father, mother, two older brothers, and an older sister—immigrated, via Paris, from Cairo to New York in the winter of 1963–64. Generally speaking, this is not an age from which immigrant children retain strong memories of their first homes, let alone nostalgia or longing for them. And it is certainly not an age from which they are expected to do so in America, whose new world, Americans have always believed, offers every reason to forget the old one as quickly as possible.

Lagnado, moreover, might be considered a model American success story. Arriving in New York as the daughter of penniless Jewish

HILLEL HALKIN is a columnist for the New York Sun and a regular contributor to these pages.

refugees from Nasser's Egypt, which forbade them to take any money or valuables with them, she did well in school; won a scholarship to Vassar; became a highly successful investigative reporter for the *New York Post*, the *Village Voice*, and the weekly *Forward* (of which she was also managing editor); and is now a senior staff member at the *Wall Street Journal*. Outwardly, indeed, she appeared to have left her Egyptian childhood thoroughly behind her. During her stint at the *Forward*, at which time I was the paper's Israel correspondent, I had frequent contact with her. Never once do I remember her mentioning her origins.

But they were there inside, it would seem, all along, for she has now published a book about them in which America, though its benefits are by no means treated dismissively, does not fare as well as one might have thought it would vis-à-vis the Egypt she remembers and has taught herself about. With the help of extensive research, culminating in a visit to her old neighborhood, street, and home, she has written a book whose first two-thirds are about the city of her early childhood and the life her family lived there. Set beside them, New York, for all its freedom and opportunity, is depicted as a cold and alienating place of refuge.

ABOVE ALL, it was such a place for Lagnado's father, "the man in the white sharkskin suit." Leon Lagnado, as he is described with clear-eyed love by his youngest daughter, could have been a character in a novel. A Cairo dandy, gambler, womanizer, and man about town known to his acquaintances as *le Capitaine*, a man whose mistress was at one point the legendary (and non-Jewish) Egyptian singer Um Kulthoum, he was also a successful entrepreneur, a caring if generally absent paterfamilias, and, in his own way, a deeply believing Jew like his rabbinic ancestors.*

This combination of rakishness and religiosity was Leon Lagnado's

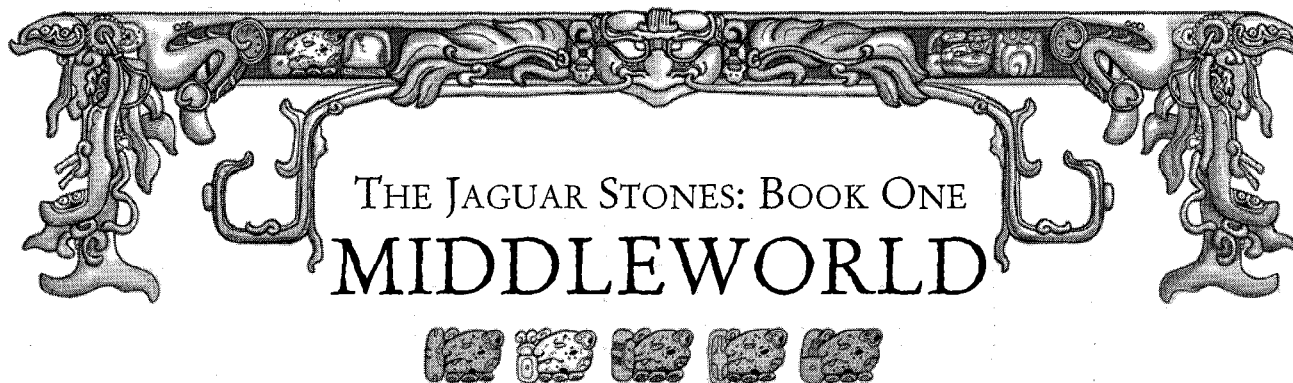
most exotic and fascinating feature. The same tall, handsome man who had a "passion for clothes and food and women that made him a fixture at the leading restaurants and patisseries [of Cairo] by day, and the cabarets, dance halls, and *cinémas en plein air* by night" became, Lucette Lagnado writes, "a different person on the eve of the Jewish Sabbath, arriving well before sundown with a large bouquet of roses for my grandmother . . . before preparing for synagogue":

What none of Leon's acquaintances could do was reconcile the man at synagogue, who seemed so immersed in his prayers, and was relentless about observing every ritual, fasting every fast, and obeying every possible commandment, and the man who disappeared night after night for forbidden, sinful pursuits. It was as if two people resided within one sharkskin suit, one who was pious and whose vestments resembled those of the priests at the Great Temple, all white and sparkling and pure, and the very different creature who led a secret, intensely thrilling life far beyond Malaka Nazli [the Cairo street on which the Lagnados lived].

THIS "SECRET" life took place in a different city from the one Cairo has become today. Although the Egyptian capital is more than ever a huge, teeming, colorful metropolis, it is also, like its sister city Alexandria (better known than Cairo to Western readers from the poems of Kavafy and the novels of Lawrence Durrell), a less worldly

* Although Lucette Lagnado modestly declines to boast of her paternal lineage, the Aleppo-based Laniados, who hailed from pre-1492 Spain, were for generations, beginning with the 16th century, one of the great rabbinic dynasties of the Levant. The Italian spelling of Lagnado is perhaps traceable to Rabbi Abraham Lagnado, who settled in Venice in the 17th century and some of whose descendants may have re-emigrated to Aleppo, from where Leon Lagnado's parents, we are told, moved to Cairo.

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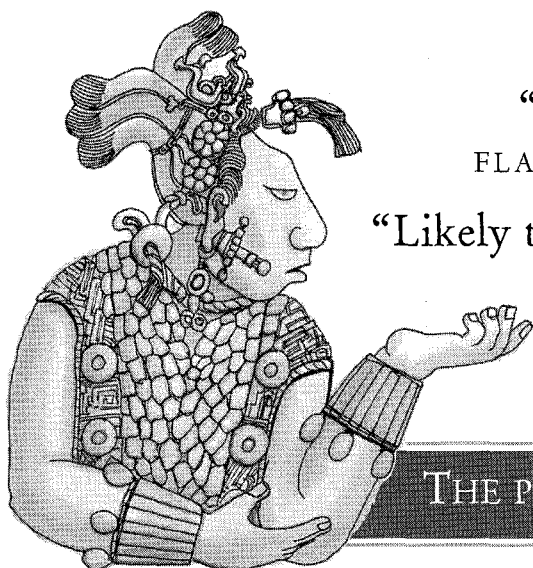
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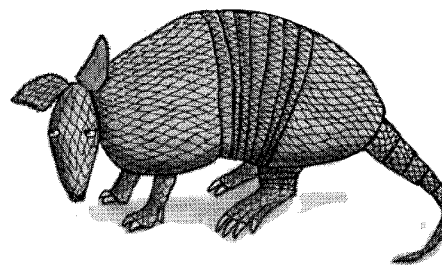
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and sophisticated place than it was in the 1940's and 50's.

Then, in the last years of the British colonial presence, which ended with the Egyptian nationalization of the Suez Canal and the unsuccessful Anglo-French invasion of 1956, the city was, in Lucette Lagnado's reconstruction of it, an extremely cosmopolitan one. Numerous foreign colonies existed in it; large Coptic and Jewish minorities lived in full equality beside their Muslim neighbors; pan-Arab nationalism was in its infancy; and Islamic fundamentalism, too, was only beginning to emerge as a significant force. A Jew conducting a liaison with a Muslim woman who was on her way to becoming the most adored performer in the Arab world, unthinkable today, was not a great scandal at the time.

Edith Lagnado, a young French teacher half the age of the bachelor

playboy she was to marry, met Leon at Cairo's La Parisiana café, where he approached her while she was drinking coffee with her mother to compliment her on her beauty. It was not, as Lucette Lagnado describes it, a happy marriage. Edith, a cultured woman, had to give up her job and devote herself to being a mother whose husband was rarely at home and had no interest in the books she loved to read. Leon—with whom she spoke French, the language in which, like many middle- and upper-class Egyptian Jews, they raised their children—led his own life and did not share his thoughts with her.

The only person in his family Leon Lagnado was ever close to was his youngest daughter, nicknamed "Loulou" and born too late to see him in his prime, for she was two years old when he had a bad accident in which he broke his leg and hip, leaving him permanently lame and

in pain. It was the end of his gallivanting days and the beginning of a long period of economic, physical, and psychological decline. This reached its nadir after the family emigrated to New York and he found himself, an aging, lonely, and unwell man, living in humiliating poverty in a strange city he did not care for while longing for a Cairo that no longer had a place for him—or for that matter, for Jews of any kind.

And yet Leon Lagnado's New York period, which lasted until his death in 1992, had, if not a happy ending, then a redeeming one. For all his vanity and superficiality, Leon had three qualities that saved him in a situation in which more ordinary men might have crumbled: an unshakable faith in God, a strong sense of his own dignity, and a feeling of responsibility to his family, whose provider he had always been and was determined to remain.

Finding an Egyptian synagogue in the Brooklyn neighborhood the Lagnados moved to, Leon slowly rebuilt his life around it and the men he befriended there while managing to earn a living, first by peddling neckties, then by graduating to a self-employed fabrics salesman, and, finally, by making some successful investments with the small amounts of money he managed to put aside. Lucette Lagnado's descriptions of her father, the former *Capitaine* of Cairo, limping with his suitcases full of ties and fabrics down the streets of New York without falling prey to self-pity are heartbreaking. But they are also inspiring. They remind us that an indomitable spirit is something no person knows he has until faced with the need to have it—and that it sometimes turns up in unexpected places.

LAGNADO HAS written a moving memoir in which, perhaps thanks to her investigative reporter's instincts, she is always present without upstaging her two main characters, her father and mother. Although many of the events in *The Man in the*

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White Sharkskin Suit took place before she was born, she has so absorbed them into herself that the reader almost forgets she was not there.

Leon Lagnado was a truly unusual combination. Still, he was perhaps not quite so unusual in the context of Egyptian Jewry as he seems when viewed from contemporary America. As practiced in the Sephardi communities of southeast Europe and the largely Arabic-speaking communities of the Middle East, traditional Judaism was more relaxed, less puritanical, and more tolerant of religiously deviant behavior than in the Ashkenazi world. Conversely, types of Jews who would have left religion completely had they been Ashkenazim retained an often superstitious attachment to it even when they did not observe many or most of its precepts.

Even today in Israel, where Jews from Sephardi and Middle Eastern backgrounds have become heavily Ashkenazified, the dichotomy between "religious" and "secular" Jews is far less pronounced among them than it is in Ashkenazi circles. I have heard of religious families from such backgrounds whose non-observant members excuse themselves in the middle of a Sabbath meal to go outside and smoke a forbidden cigarette, something unimaginable in the case of religious Ashkenazim. It is also common to observe totally "secular" Israelis from Sephardi or Middle Eastern families kissing a mezuzah every time they enter a home or even go from room to room. The Judaism they come from was never a take-it-or-leave-it proposition.

Leon Lagnado can be viewed as a somewhat extreme case of such behavior. The Jewish community of Cairo in which he lived and raised a family was truly the community of all Cairo's Jews; there was hardly a Jew who did not belong to it and play a role, no matter how great or small. As modernized as parts of Cairo society were in the mid-20th century, it was a city in which you

were either a Muslim, Christian, or Jew—and, whichever you were, you were part of a shared world that had its holidays and rituals, its foods, customs, ceremonies, prayers, and rites of passage, and its extended families that observed them together.

Dropping out of this world was all but impossible. If you were an adventurous or non-conventional spirit, you might have found it confining or asphyxiating; but you were never abandoned or forgotten in it. It was a traditional society, small versions of which have existed in America, too, among religious separatists from the Amish to black-hat Hasidim, as well as among immigrant and second-generation ethnic communities of the kind celebrated and mourned in *The Godfather*. Yet in its essence America from its inception has been a land that has stressed individual autonomy over community.

In comparing the Egypt her family left with the America it came to, Lucette Lagnado never sentimentalizes the past or excoriates the present for supplanting it. She is aware that, had her parents remained in Cairo, she could never have become what she is today, and that the journalist mourning a lost world of human solidarity might then have grown up to be a frustrated housewife like her mother, longing for another life. Yet she also knows that, in this lost world, her parents would not have ended up, frightened and alone, in impersonal nursing homes, and that she would not have had to write about her dying father:

I tried to embrace him, reaching for his thin, skeletal frame barely covered by the blue nightgown, but more often than not he was too agitated. "*Loulou, ou je suis?*" he'd ask; Loulou, where am I? And then, as some nurse

An Appeal

By

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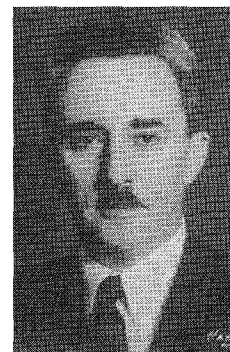
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passed by, he'd try to catch her eye and say with that tony British accent he still maintained after all these years, "I want to go home, please take me home." More often than not, the nurse would simply keep walking.

THE SAD TRUTH about the Cairo of Lucette Lagnado's childhood and the New York she lives in now is that there is no way of combining the best features of each, of having tight-knit communities and individual freedom, strong networks of mutual obligations and a culture of self-fulfillment. Although the first kind of society may take a long time to evolve into the second, it is ultimately a package deal. And given the direction today's world is heading in, which explains much of the fury of radical Islam, Cairo itself will sooner or later be like New York.

Lucette Lagnado knows this, too. When she finally revisits her family home on Malaka Nazli, now patriotically renamed Ramses Street, she finds that

Egyptian bureaucrats had decided to build a highway parallel to it, ostensibly to improve traffic flow. Now, the ugly concrete structure extended like a dark shadow across the once-serene avenue, traffic flowed only one way instead of two, and bottle-necks were worse than ever.

Only the elderly Muslim woman who lives in the Lagnados' old apartment with her daughter does not know it. Simply, graciously, with no sense of how preposterous it is, she tells Lagnado that she has a spare room and will gladly let her have it if she will come back to live there. Overwhelmed by the gesture, Lagnado rushes to embrace her. But, of course, one can never move back to Malaka Nazli. Hence the elegiac tone of this beautifully written book.

A Different Kind of Spy

Christopher's Ghosts

by Charles McCarry

Overlook. 272 pp. \$25.00

Reviewed by
Brian M. Carney

FOR NEARLY 40 years, the spy novelist Charles McCarry has been writing frighteningly prescient books. In 1979, *The Better Angels* posited a plot by Arab terrorists to blow up passenger jetliners in flight over major cities around the world. In 1995, *Shelley's Heart* revolved around the putative outcome of the 2000 presidential elections. In this fictional version of events that were then still five years into the future, a legal dispute arises over the close outcome of the balloting—the dispute centers on a few hundred votes in a single state—and ultimately the Supreme Court has to step in. A sitting President under impeachment is also involved, with a secret society at Yale thrown in for good measure. Islamist terrorists play a role, too.

Christopher's Ghosts, McCarry's latest novel, is not a look forward but rather a look backward, to Berlin 1939. As it opens, we are weeks shy of the outbreak of World War II. The Nazis have been in power for six years, but the worst is still to come, and McCarry's main characters are ignorant of it.

The protagonist is Paul Christopher, who in his mature life has been the focus of McCarry's previous books. Both he and his father are Americans, but Paul was born in Germany to a German mother and the family makes its home in Berlin. Lori, Paul's mother, is a baroness from the old Prussian aristocracy, "a member of an ancient family, descended from ancestors who had fought and dined with Charlemagne

during the First Reich." Her lineage may thus be thought to grant her a certain immunity from Nazi inquisitiveness—so all her friends believe—but Lori herself is less sanguine; her father had been beaten to death by a "Bolshevik rabble," and she fears that her son may meet a similarly untimely fate "at the hands of the politically insane" in late-30's Berlin.

Indeed, the Christophers, who have been quietly ushering friends out of Germany and into Denmark on their sailboat, have been regularly rounded up for questioning by the SS. Paul's father Hubbard views his Nazi tormentor, one Major Stutzer, with the unconcealed disdain of one who has never known unchecked tyranny. "He looked amused when being questioned by Stutzer," we are told by the narrator, "as if he had bought a ticket to a play that was so bad that it was interesting." And the narrator adds: "It was hard to imagine a more dangerous look to have on your face when visiting No. 8 Prinz-Albrechtstrasse."

As for Paul, he is sixteen and in love, and, like his father, he too has yet to come to grips with the danger facing both him and the object of his affections: a partly Jewish girl who goes by the name of Rima. "She was pretty," we are informed. "If she had been happy, she would have been beautiful." As the first part of the novel comes to a close, Major Stutzer, who "could send [all these individuals] to a concentration camp or even summarily execute them" if he chose, has not yet made his move. But Paul has already experienced a coming-of-age under monstrous circumstances, an education in how deep evil can run.

If THE FIRST part of *Christopher's Ghosts* is about the gathering storm that will culminate in World War II and the Holocaust, the second part skips those shattering events to pick up in the late 1950's, on the eve of the erection of the Berlin Wall, and

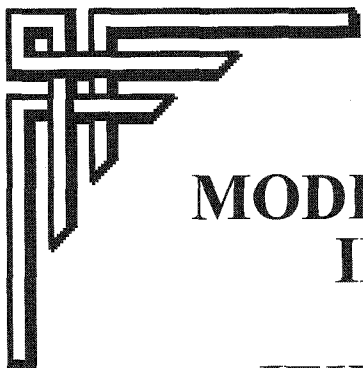
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MODELS AND MEANINGS IN THE HISTORY OF JEWISH LEADERSHIP

Hal M. Lewis

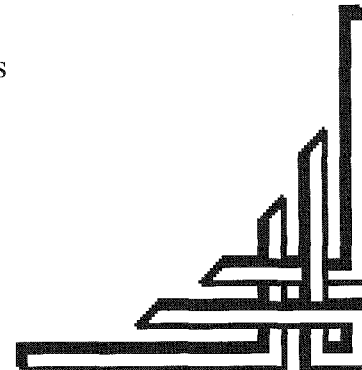
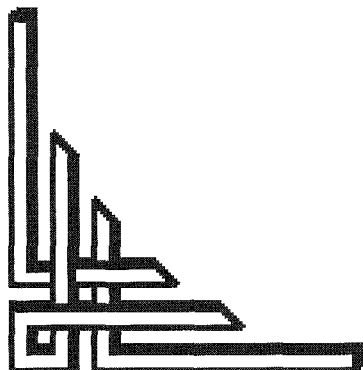
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moves forward from there. It features Paul in the role familiar to McCarry readers—that of a cold-war espionage agent for the United States.

In earlier novels, Paul has unraveled JFK's assassination, tracked down a scroll purportedly proving that Jesus was an asset of Roman intelligence, and (in *The Better Angels*) thwarted the terrorist who has been blowing up passenger planes over population centers. Along the way, he has also saved the members of a lost tribe of Israel who have been living as Muslims in the Atlas Mountains for generations.

In *Christopher's Ghosts*, Paul investigates a Soviet plot to train Islamist terrorists while joining a semi-retired Mossad agent on a hunt for a Nazi in hiding. Less a James Bond type, as this might suggest, Paul is a different kind of spy altogether: the spy as student of hu-

man nature, the type who, eschewing weapons, relies on observation and knowledge of his fellow man to get by in the world. And this is why, as compelling and satisfying as the second half of *Christopher's Ghost* is, the first half remains of greater interest: it explains how and why a man like Paul Christopher becomes the student of human nature that he is.

It is sometimes said of a certain kind of novel that it is "well-observed"—meaning that the novelist gets the little things right. McCarry does that. His descriptions of pre-war Berlin and his portraits of the main characters are particularly convincing. With a few characteristically deft strokes, he limns for us Rima's father, Dr. Johann Kaltenbach. This is a man who

believed that the present political situation, as he called the

[Nazi] dictatorship, would pass. In his own mind he was a German like any other. . . . Since childhood he had gone to church every Sunday and on all Christian holidays. He prayed as a Christian at meals and before he slept. He sang *Stille Nacht* on Christmas Eve.

As Rima explains, her father is "a Lutheran, and has been all his life." But according to the Nuremberg laws, he has been deemed a Jew on the basis of his ancestry. Even so, he has persisted in his belief that it is all a mistake:

He still thinks it will be rectified, that everything will be rectified. I think he believes that the clock of existence has struck the wrong hour or something, and that the people who now rule Germany are men from Mars who somehow got lost in the universe and ended up on our planet. One day

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To declare oneself a conservative in American foreign policy is to enter immediately into a fractious, long-standing debate. Should America retreat from the world, deal with the world as it is, or try to transform it in its own image? Which school of thought — traditionalist, realist, or neoconservative — is truest to the country's ideals and interests? *The Right War?* brings together the most articulate and influential voices in the debate among conservatives over the tactics and strategy of America's engagement in Iraq, running the gamut from protests to second thoughts to full-throated endorsements.

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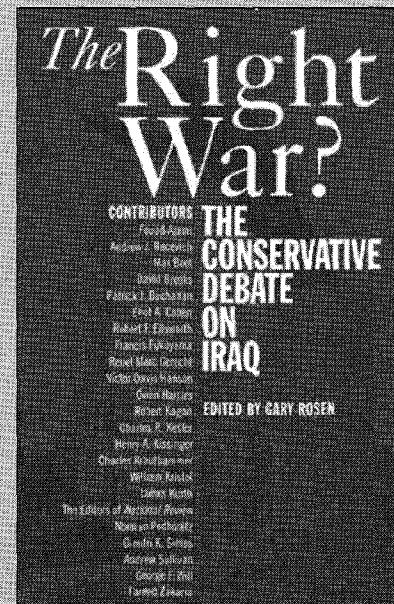
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God, the supreme clockmaker, will notice this mechanical error and send them back where they came from, and all will be right with the world again.

This, then, is the position in which the characters find themselves. Paul is an American who the Nazis think might really be a German-born traitor. Rima, who by an accident of chronology falls just outside the reach of the Nuremberg laws, is a German who "for legal purposes," in the words of Major Stutzer, "is not considered a Jew, but is a Jew just the same." The fate of each, as of Paul's American father and Aryan mother, hangs on the whim of an SS martinet. And protection is impossible to find. American officialdom is more or less helpless—in prewar Berlin, Washington has few eyes and ears on the ground and little or no capacity to act.

THE PAUL CHRISTOPHER in the first half of *Christopher's Ghosts* is a figure preparing for the future, a future marked by the full flowering of Nazi and Communist totalitarianism and its joint and several heirs. In 1939 Berlin, the Christophers and Rima learn that the individual stands precious little chance against an evil state apparatus that has set out to destroy him—especially an individual (like Paul and Rima's respective fathers) who, by denying reality, disarms himself before his enemies.

This is the same lesson that informs the behavior of Paul Christopher the adult, the grown man who in the second half of the novel moves, under cover, in and out of the Soviet sector of Berlin to perform his acts of espionage and deriding-do. When determined and evil men set out to do you harm, you can acquiesce or you can resist. What you cannot do, because they have already foreclosed that choice, is to ignore them altogether. Fortunately, however, well-placed, well-trained, and intelligent figures, serv-

ing their nation and the cause of good, can make a difference, at least some of the time.

Today, as large sectors of our own political class have adopted the position that the "war on terror" is nothing but a figment of the President's inflamed imagination, and have effectively declared their intent to ignore the overriding reality of our time, this is an especially valuable lesson to relearn. Charles McCarry's novels are as good a place as any to begin relearning it, and to be entertained and held in suspense into the bargain. You need not have read a Paul Christopher novel to appreciate *Christopher's Ghosts*. (In my opinion, the masterpiece among McCarry's works is *The Last Supper*, 1983.) But if this is your first, it is unlikely to be your last.

Political Economy

The Squandering of America: How the Failure of our Politics Undermines Our Prosperity

by Robert Kuttner

Knopf. 352 pp. \$26.95

Reviewed by
Dan Seligman

ROBERT KUTTNER is a non-mainstream economist with deep, deep doubts about free markets, free trade, unregulated industries, and nonunion workers. He may also be the only economist who still speaks positively of Richard Nixon's 1971 decision to impose wage and price controls. His *dirigiste* policy recommendations might seem to leave him without a natural audience in his profession, but, as a powerful polemicist with a

DAN SELIGMAN is a contributing editor of *Forbes*.

readily available soapbox—he is a founding co-editor of the left-liberal *American Prospect*—he definitely has a following.

Over the last six years, the United States has enjoyed an unprecedented combination of low inflation and low rates of unemployment. But our economy is hardly free of problems. In Kuttner's telling, so powerful is their cumulative effect as to have brought calamity upon most Americans, and more calamities are yet to come. In this book, he sounds a trumpet call for political rebellion and for a radical reversal in economic direction. In one way or another, he wants to bring about the changes needed "to housebreak capitalism."

KUTTNER's grievances against our current economic arrangements are developed in ten chapters of *The Squandering of America*. He opens with a chapter about mass economic hardship in today's society. Given the fact that median personal income (after adjusting for inflation) is close to an all-time high in America, his title for this chapter—"A Hidden Depression"—would appear to be a case of forcing the facts to fit the theory. But Kuttner presents some undeniable bad news.

In the years after World War II, median household income in the United States increased at an annual rate of around 2.4 percent, a figure that would provide each new generation with incomes double those of its parents. But those days are long gone. Since the mid-1970's, median household income has risen on average by less than 1 percent a year, and the assumption—once a critical component of the American dream—that children will almost naturally come to live better than their parents is no longer valid.

What happened? In Kuttner's judgment, the transformation mainly reflects a growing disparity in income distribution, with the economy-wide gains of recent years going increasingly and overwhelm-

ingly to the rich. Many economists who are not extremists have observed that virtually all the productivity gains of recent years have flowed to the top 10 percent of the income distribution. Kuttner brings a sense of fire-breathing outrage to this shift. In elaborating its implications, he draws heavily on "the lived experience of economic stress." By this he means not only the difficulties faced by the modern middle-class family in trying to pay for college, get decent health insurance, or buy a house, but also what he sees as the increased physical and psychic stress associated with longer work hours and the desperate effort to maintain "basic living standards" by deploying both parents in the paid labor force whether they wish to be there or not.

In his second chapter, "The Assault on the Good Society," Kuttner casts a fond look back at the much more egalitarian America of the postwar years, when the GI Bill enriched the lives of millions seeking their own homes and college educations. His explanation for what happened to that lovely world leans hard on the collapse of the American labor movement, which today represents only about 8 percent of private-sector employees (versus about 40 percent in the 1950's).

Organized labor, Kuttner tells us, is indispensable to the maintenance of a "broadly egalitarian economy" and a good society. He also tells us that American workers still want to have unions. But they have been defeated by the new willingness of American management to fight dirty by, "in flagrant violation of the Wagner Act," firing workers who join unions.

As it unfolds over successive chapters, Kuttner's argument takes on an increasingly strident tone. He contends, for example, that "one or both of the last two Presidential elections were stolen," a proposition he relates to the dominance of the new business elite. He argues that

globalization—defined by him as "global deregulation in the interest of the business elite"—is an intellectual swindle, and writes that it has conned millions of Americans into viewing *laissez faire* as the only possible model for international trade. He cheers German and Japanese practices that routinely bring government into major corporate investment decisions. In the "managed capitalism" he yearns for, the private sector would be made less private.

IN EVALUATING Kuttner's contentions, we might begin with his pitiable rendering of today's middle-class families, frantically working overtime in an effort to maintain basic living standards. The portrait he paints simply does not square with what is known about job satisfaction and personal happiness in America.

The best available data on these matters continue to come from the ongoing General Social Survey conducted at the University of Chicago. As crisply summarized by Tom W. Smith, who directs the poll: "The rule is that most people are pretty satisfied. . . . The level of job satisfaction has remained virtually unchanged in the last four decades." Smith makes it clear that job satisfaction is a major component of happiness.

Even increasing inequality, which *The Squandering of America* identifies as the greatest failure of the American political order, is not the disaster Kuttner makes it out to be. American voters have never been particularly concerned about income inequality or responsive to political appeals based on envy of the rich—obviously because, thanks to the mobility made possible by the system, yesterday's poor continue to have a fair shot at becoming tomorrow's rich. Inequality, in short, is not a static phenomenon.

No more realistic are Kuttner's several proposals to restore middle-class income gains by adopting poli-

cies that would revive union power. Most economists today view organized labor as a bearer of bad tidings. Unions use their monopoly power—the power to shut down a company—to extract above-market rates for their members, resulting in turn in higher unit labor costs and a deadweight loss of efficiency in the economy as a whole.

In the decades when unions possessed real bargaining power, employers typically succumbed to threatened strikes, and the additional labor costs were routinely passed on to consumers, provoking never-ending inflationary spirals. This game became unsustainable by the 1970's, when employers found themselves competing with low-cost foreign producers. In the auto and steel industries, employment costs were then running 80 percent over market levels. The unions ended up simply pricing their members out of the market and onto the unemployment rolls. The ensuing adjustment to reality has been painful, and the automobile industry is still not over it. But Kuttner's explanation—that the cause of the pain has been management nastiness—is a fairy tale.

WHICH BRINGS us to Kuttner's preferred alternative to the American system—namely, a managed economy. Many Americans with political memories will equate this with "industrial policy," long since dismissed as a fad of the 1970's. The core idea, as summarized by the economist Lester Thurow, one of the policy's key advocates, was that "major investment decisions [had] become too important to be left to the private market alone." Instead, the government should advise or arm-twist the corporate sector into putting its money where government planners thought it most likely to work, while also ensuring that factories would blossom in depressed areas rather than in the already thriving sunbelt.

This concept was embraced for a

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Myths About Israel and the Middle East (1)

Do the media feed us fiction, instead of fact?

We all know that, by dint of constant repetition, white can be made to appear black, good can get transformed into evil, and myth may take the place of reality. Israel, with roughly one-thousandth of the world's population and with a similar fraction of the territory of this planet, seems to engage a totally disproportionate attention of the print and broadcast media of the world. Unfortunately, much of what the media tell us — in reporting, editorializing in columns, and in analysis — are endlessly repeated myths.

What are the facts?

■ **Myth:** The "Palestinians" are a nation and therefore deserving of a homeland.

Reality: The concept of Palestinian nationhood is a new one and had not been heard of until after the Six-Day War (1967), when Israel, by its victory, came into the administration of the territories of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip. The so-called "Palestinians" are no more different from the Arabs living in the neighboring countries of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, than Wisconsinites are from Iowans.

■ **Myth:** Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip are "occupied Arab territory."

Reality: All of "Palestine" — east and west of the Jordan River — was part of the League of Nations mandate. Under the Balfour Declaration, all of it was to be the "national home for the Jewish people." In violation of this mandate, Great Britain severed the entire area east of the Jordan River — about 75% of Palestine — and gave it to the Arabs, who created on it the kingdom of Transjordan. When Israel declared its independence in 1948, five Arab armies invaded the new country in order to destroy it at its very birth. They were defeated by the Israelis. The Transjordanians, however, remained in occupation of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and East Jerusalem. They proceeded to drive all Jews from those territories and to systematically destroy all Jewish houses of worship and other institutions. The Transjordanians (now renamed "Jordanians") were the occupiers for nineteen years. Israel regained these territories following its victory in the Six-Day War. Israel has returned the entire Gaza Strip to the Palestinians. The final status of

the "West Bank" will be decided if and when the Palestinians will finally be able to sit down and seriously talk peace with Israel.

■ **Myth:** Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") are the "greatest obstacle to peace."

Reality: This is simply not correct, although it has been repeated so often that many have come to believe it. The greatest obstacle to peace is the intransigence and the

"Peace will only come when the Arabs finally accept the reality of Israel. And that is not a myth — that is a fact!"

irreconcilable hostility of the Arabs. Not more than 150,000 Jews are settled in these territories, living among about 1.4 million Arabs. How can Jews living there be an obstacle to

peace? Why shouldn't they live there? About 1.2 million Arabs live in Israel proper. They are not an obstacle to peace. Neither the Israelis nor they themselves consider them as such.

■ **Myth:** Israel is unwilling to yield "land for peace."

Reality: The concept that to the loser, rather than to the victor, belong the spoils is a radically new one, never before thought of in world history. Israel has emerged victorious in the five wars imposed on it by the Arabs. In order to make peace, it has returned over 90% of the territory occupied by it, specifically the vast Sinai Peninsula, to Egypt. That territory contained some of the most advanced military installations in the world, prosperous cities and settlements, and oil fields developed entirely by Israel that made it independent of petroleum imports. In the Camp David Accords, Israel agreed to autonomy for Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") with the permanent status to be determined after three years. But no responsible Palestinian representation has been available to negotiate with Israel about this.

All these myths (and others we shall talk about) have poisoned the atmosphere for decades. The root cause of the never-ending conflict is the unwillingness of the Arabs (and not just the Palestinians) to accept the reality of Israel. What a pity that those of the Palestinians who are not Israeli citizens have lived and continue to live in poverty, misery and ignorance. They could have chosen to accept the proposed partition of the country in 1947, would now have had their state alongside Israel for almost sixty years and could have lived in peace and prosperity. They could have kept hundreds of thousands of refugees in their homes and could have saved tens of thousands of lives. Peace will only come when the Arabs finally accept the reality of Israel. And that is not a myth — that is a fact!

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time by the Carter administration. But Carter's own Council of Economic Advisers ultimately rejected it as unworkable, saying it was "presumptuous to assume that successful identification [by government] of winning and losing industrial sectors is possible."

Americans reflecting on the track record of managed capitalism elsewhere could also point to the two largest economies that today might qualify as "managed": Germany and Japan. Although their respective arrangements get good reviews from Kuttner, both have chronically lower growth rates than ours and, in Germany's case, higher unemployment rates. In Germany, during 1991-2005, income from wages declined in inflation-adjusted terms by 2 percent, while Japan has been almost continuously beset by deflation and recession over the past decade.

American ideas of fairness in economics seem to lead to meritocratic policies under which those who produce the most get paid the most. In contrast, European ideas of fairness have led to egalitarian policies. There is no longer much doubt about which produces healthier economic performance.

The major countries of Europe, having embraced many of the policies favored by Kuttner, are now coming under intense pressure to alter course. Even in France, the higher U.S. growth rates and lower unemployment rates were major issues in the most recent presidential election. (See "Can Europe Compete?" in the September COMMENTARY.) Whatever a non-mainstream economist may say, we must be doing something right.

TEN YEARS ago, I reviewed (in the *Wall Street Journal*) an earlier work of Robert Kuttner's called *Everything for Sale*. That book was, in essence, a protest against the triumph of conservative economics in the 1980's and 90's. Kuttner's core complaint centered on the move to

deregulation, with its accompanying emphasis on market-based solutions to the country's economic woes. But strangely lacking was any serious attempt on his part to explain why Americans had turned against the old regulatory approach, or any acknowledgment that they might have had some rational basis for disenchantment with the various statist approaches of an earlier era.

The Squandering of America is an updating and expansion of that earlier book, this time with a harder political edge. But once again something central is missing from Kuttner's exposition. He never explains why, if America's economic performance has been as poor as he insists, there has been no political upheaval—or indeed serious discussion of anything resembling the managed economy for which he pines.

Kuttner has obviously thought about this lacuna, and reaches for the reader's sympathy in a passage describing his frustration:

I have attended Democratic fund-raising events in the Park Avenue homes of investment bankers, where there was plenty of enthusiasm for human rights, morning-after pills, and climate change, but nary a word about financial regulation or social investment.

What has prevented the message from spreading? One answer might be that Kuttner's message is wildly unrealistic and unappealing—even to those who attend Democratic-party fund-raising events on Park Avenue.

Advance and Retreat

Exit Ghost

by Philip Roth

Houghton Mifflin. 304 pp. \$26.00

Reviewed by
Carol Iannone

"An aged man is but a paltry thing, / A tattered coat upon a stick," wrote William Butler Yeats in "Sailing to Byzantium." Unless, Yeats added, "Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing / For every tatter in its mortal dress."

Philip Roth used another phrase in Yeats's great poem as the title of his novel *The Dying Animal* (2001). His new novel, *Exit Ghost*, is about a man aging in more ways than one and trying to sing himself back into the flow of life. But the most one can say is that in this case the endgame comes none too soon; for Soul in this book is simply not singing nearly loud enough to redeem the tattered coat that is its protagonist Nathan Zuckerman.

This is the last of nine novels in which the character of Zuckerman has served as Roth's alter ego, elaborating in the first person on aspects of a life and career very much like the author's own. *Exit Ghost* is thus also about the theme of fading literary power, which it ironically exemplifies, and about the fading as well of the intense and vital American literary culture in which Roth/Zuckerman first emerged.

Although a character named Zuckerman first appeared earlier in the Roth canon, the series, if we may call it that, opens in *The Ghost Writer*, a novel published in 1979 but set in the 1950's. In it, Zuckerman as aspiring young author pays an overnight visit to his literary idol, an uncompromising craftsman named E.I. Lonoff, who lives a secluded life in the Berkshire woods, where he pens his short stories. *Exit*

CAROL IANNONE is editor-at-large of Academic Questions.

Ghost, set in the present, also involves Lonoff, who is now dead and forgotten by younger readers—except for one, Richard Kliman, a vulgar and ambitious would-be littérateur who wants to write his biography. The contrast between the dead writer's pure, exacting dedication to literature and the predatory biographer's desire to expose what he believes is the salacious secret of his subject's life is one of several ways in which Roth makes these two novels serve as bookends to his Zuckerman series.

Another is the figure of Zuckerman himself, now far from the priapic young author burning with the energies of former days. Instead, we find him here elaborating in intricate detail on the effects of the prostate operation he underwent several books back. This writer, who had won renown not only for his unprecedented sexual explicitness but for his gospel of untrammelled personal freedom, is now impotent and incontinent. For some years he, too, has lived virtually alone in the isolated woodsy area of the Berkshires where he first met Lonoff, and where in imitation of his idol he has striven to work out a life of reasonable satisfaction.

But now Zuckerman receives a quickening jolt, in the form of a possible medical procedure to improve his condition. The news brings him to New York City, where, feeling a surge of life, he arranges to swap residences for a year with a young couple seeking a temporary rural retreat: the wealthy, privileged, alluring Jamie Logan and her devoted husband Billy Davidoff. In the end the exchange is canceled, but for a short time Zuckerman becomes part of the couple's life while simultaneously fending off Kliman's invasion into Lonoff's secrets and reacquainting himself with Lonoff's once-young mistress, Amy Bellette, formerly the inspiration for a fascinating flight of Zuckermanian fantasy in *The Ghost Writer*, now a shriveled

wraith battling cancer, surviving on nothing but the memory of her brief glory days with the great Lonoff and lamenting how political correctness and other trends in the literary culture have robbed him of his place.

All of this opens up new prospects for Zuckerman—of duty, action, contact, urgency, involvement, inspiration, association—that he alternately moves to embrace and then shrinks from. His repeated pattern of advance-and-retreat forms, indeed, the shape of the novel. Although the title *Exit Ghost* is evidently meant to allude to *Macbeth*, with Zuckerman, Banquo-like, haunting the world from which he has been rudely dispatched, it also suggests *Hamlet*, a play in which the haunted main character both wants and does not want to take the path that fate has thrust before him.

ENOUGH OF the old Zuckerman remains for him more or less to fall in love with Jamie. Alone in his hotel room at the New York Hilton, he composes lengthy, formal dialogues between the two of them, named "He" and "She," in which they discuss life, youth, age, literature, and the rather implausible idea of a relationship. But we soon learn of the prosaic reality that resists Zuckerman's efforts: no such interaction is even remotely on Jamie's mind; unexciting, adoring Billy is evidently (along with some fervent Bush-hatred) enough for her; and she is amazingly content with the wedded normalcy that Zuckerman himself has always rejected in favor of his more "interesting" path of "repeated marital failure, furtive adultery, the emotional boomerang of erotic attachments," and whatever assorted perversity he could get hold of.

While Zuckerman tries to spark something into being with Jamie, at least in thought, he must also deal with the very real presence of Richard Kliman, the most vivid character in this book. Tall, virile, athletic, good-looking, Kliman, like

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

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Gary Rosen, Managing Editor

the younger Zuckerman himself, is a man of "no restraints," sometimes nasty and disrespectful, always peremptory, demanding, and loquacious. Nathan's envy of him is made keener by his suspicion that he is Jamie's lover. Though appalled at what Kliman means to do, and determined to stop the publication of his exposé of Lonoff, he is at the same time fascinated. "The Jews can't stop making these," he reflects:

I would have supposed the type had all but disappeared from his generation and that mild, reasonable Billy Davidoff was closer to the current norm—and for all I knew, Kliman was the last of the agitators and affronters.

In this company of affronters, Nathan forthwith acknowledges, he himself was once a member in, as it were, good standing. Not only his scandalous early novel *Carnovsky* (a.k.a. *Portnoy's Complaint*, 1969) but much of his early career had been an affront. He was an affront's affront—now, in his decline, facing a man in the prime of youth who has set out to usurp Nathan's world as Nathan once usurped the world before him. "I had been out of contact with anyone like [Kliman] for a long time," he reflects. "I had been out of contact with a lot of things for a long time."

WITH EVERYTHING that is going on in this novel, Roth has pitched the stakes high enough to keep the reader turning pages. And there are local pleasures, too, including Zuckerman's observations on some of the changes in city life that have taken place during his recent self-exile. These include the astonishing state of undress in which many contemporary American women appear in public, and the quasi-Dantean spectacle of a street full of people unselfconsciously barking to invis-

ble interlocutors via cell phones.

But as a novel *Exit Ghost* is marred by wearisome repetition, as Zuckerman again and again reviews at every turn why he does not, cannot, will not grasp the potential of the new phase of life presenting itself to him. To his already considerable physical deficits, amplified by glimpses of both the cancer-stricken Amy and her descriptions of the hard death of Lonoff, he adds the possibility of memory loss—which permits Roth to start playing postmodern games that make us unsure of what is actually happening. Between the two of them, at any rate, Zuckerman and his creator discover no means whatsoever of transcending the physical continuum of their lives; as they were once obsessed with sex and bodily pleasure, so are they now tediously obsessed with bodily decay and death.

Inevitably, what the reader begins to suspect is that this relentless focus on decline and mortality is, for Roth, little more than an excuse for not working his material through to satisfactory conclusion. Instead, he pads his pages with literary allusions, aimless digressions, and half-hearted denunciations of President Bush and the rich Republican Texas circle of which Jamie's parents are a part.

The truth is, Zuckerman's story and a good part of Roth's ended years ago. Which is why, in the three Zuckerman novels preceding this one—*American Pastoral* (1997), *I Married a Communist* (1997), and *The Human Stain* (2001)—Zuckerman was confined to narrating the tales of other characters. As he muses in *American Pastoral*, "What he'd made his fiction from was gone—a first-generation American father possessed by the Jewish demons, a second-generation American son possessed by their exorcism: that was his whole story." And no less

gone for him are the "notables"—those

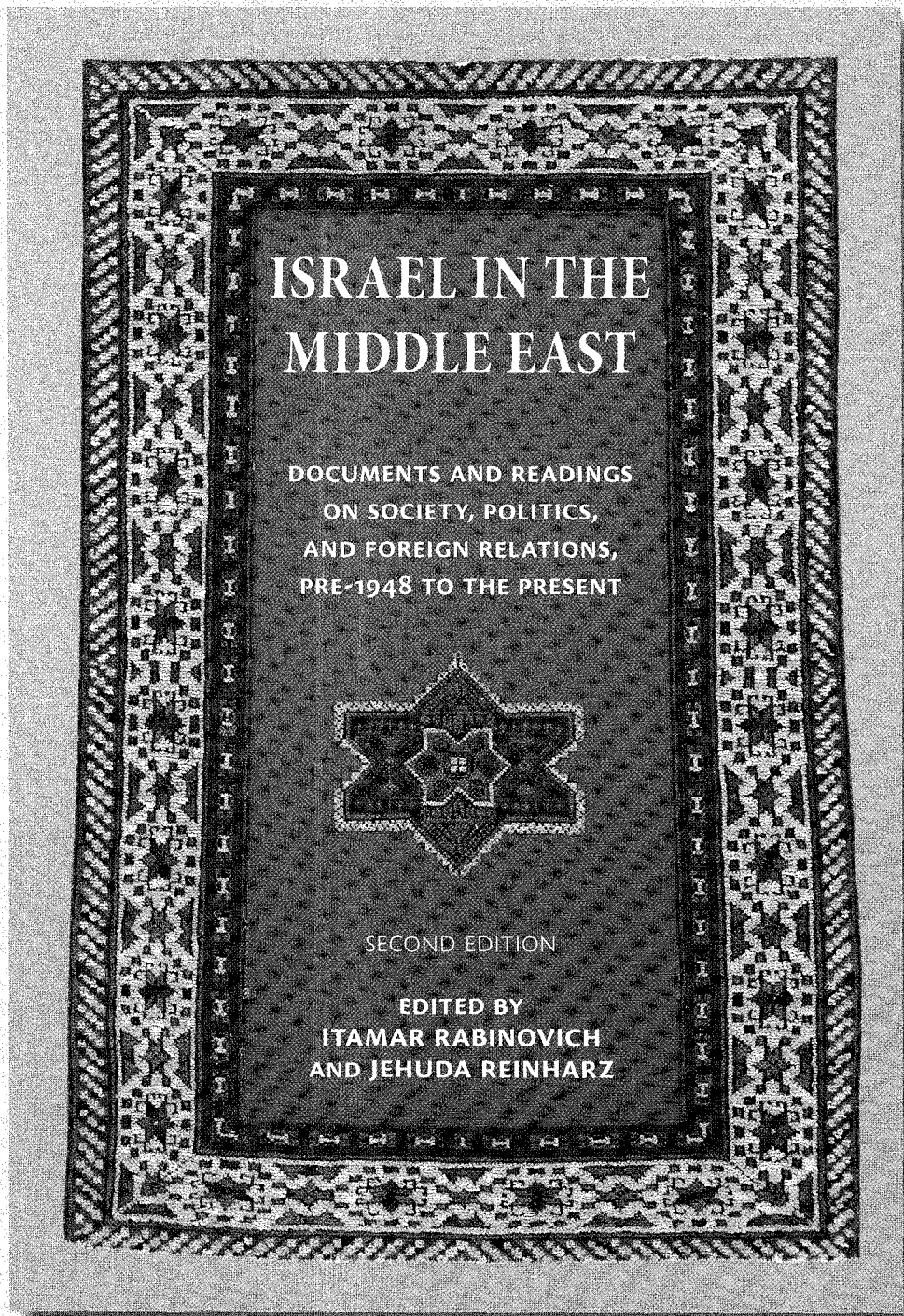
intellectually exceptional American sons of immigrant Jewish housepainters and butchers and garment workers who were then in their prime, running *Partisan Review* and writing for *COMMENTARY* and the *New Leader* and *Dissent*, irascible rivals sharply contentious with one another, bearing the emotional burden of having been raised by semiliterate Yiddish-speaking parents whose immigrant limitations and meager culture evoked ire and tenderness in equally crippling portions.

That world was Zuckerman/Roth's matrix, and those burdened Jews, righteous rabbis, dominating fathers, and patriarchal critics with high-minded ideals and impossible standards, whom he deliberately chagrined again and again—those figures were his best literary friends. They were the goad against which he chafed and that brought his art into being. The story was over when his battle with them was won.

And won it was. No wonder Zuckerman falters and retreats. For what he apparently cannot bear confronting is the part played by his own aggressive licensing of behavior and expression, the trouncing of all limits, standards, and restraints, in forming the culture that he now deploras—a culture that has replaced bold transgressiveness with louche nonchalance and literary devotion with personalism and sensationalism. In *American Pastoral*, his best novel to date, Roth had begun exploring the costs of the license and liberation he had championed, but evidently the task was too chilling, or too damning. Now it seems he would rather just plead age and illness and get Zuckerman and himself back to the unchallenging silence of the Berkshire woods.

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Does the Universe have a Purpose?

Unlikely.

Perhaps you hoped for a stronger statement, one way or the other. But as a scientist I don't believe I



can make one. Science can never unambiguously prove that there is no such purpose.

As Carl Sagan said, in another context: Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

Of course, nothing would stop science from uncovering positive evidence of divine guidance. For example, tomorrow night if we look up at the stars and they have been rearranged into a pattern that reads, "I am here," I think even the most hard-nosed scientific skeptic would suspect something was up.

But no such unambiguous signs have been uncovered among the millions and millions of pieces of data we have gleaned about the natural world over centuries of exploration. And this is precisely why a scientist can conclude that it is very unlikely that there is any divine purpose...

CONTINUED ONLINE.

Lawrence M. Krauss is a professor of physics and astronomy at Case Western Reserve University and the director of the Center for Education and Research in Cosmology and Astrophysics.

Yes.

Consider this question: Do the Earth and mankind have a purpose? Namely, to defeat and rise above our animal natures;



to create goodness, beauty, and holiness where only physics and animal life once existed; to create what might be (if we succeed) the only tiny pinprick of goodness in the

universe—which is otherwise (so far as we know) morally null and void. If no other such project exists anywhere in the cosmos, our victory would change the nature of the universe. If there are similar projects elsewhere, more power to them; but our own task remains unchanged.

Why seek goodness?

Because most humans desire goodness...

CONTINUED ONLINE.

David Gelernter is a professor of computer science at Yale University and a national fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Certainly.

But first let me explain. A common scientific view is that evolution occurs simply because matter obeys some unseen law whereby a simple organism will, if it evolves at all, become a more complex one. Evolution is thus a blind process without purpose and science will one day uncover the simple mechanical rules underlying every seeming mystery. Our own lives, therefore, are equally without purpose. There is no place here for the spirit, the immortal soul.

Many people find this hard or impossible to accept. Even that great scientist Albert Einstein sustained a mystical outlook on life that was, he said, constantly renewed from the wonder and humility that filled him when he gazed at the stars. I wonder, can our finite minds ever truly understand such things as eternity and infinity? My own



thinking requires a beginning and an ending, an alpha and omega. "In the beginning was the Word," says the Bible. Yes, of course—the big bang. But it is impossible to imagine "nothingness" before that cosmic eruption...

CONTINUED ONLINE.

Jane Goodall is the founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and a UN Messenger of Peace.

I Hope So.

And if it doesn't, it's up to us to give it one. But first, let us consider these questions: Why the world? Why people? Why did God consider it useful or even good to introduce them into his universal plan?

If we are to believe an old Talmudic legend, these questions are as old as Creation, and perhaps even older.



The angels did in fact try to dissuade him. "What good will they be?" asked the Angel of Truth. "People will be unable to keep from lying." The Angel of Peace added, "People will never be able to live in peace without quarreling amongst each other." And so why not simply give up?

Was God wrong not to listen to his celestial counselors' wise warnings? History's answer seems depressing. It didn't take long for Adam and Eve, in paradise, to disobey divine will. These pitiful parents left their two sons to argue; one became the assassin, the second the victim of the other. Death thereby made its debut into human memory in the form of murder.

Incapable of living in society, people irritated God so much that he ended up lamenting the confidence he had placed in them. Hence the

devastating flood. Was it his mistake to start over again?...

CONTINUED ONLINE.

Elie Wiesel is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities and University Professor at Boston University. This essay was translated from the French by Jamie Moore.

Not Sure.

Anyone who expresses a more definitive response to the question is claiming access to knowledge not based on empirical foundations. This remarkably persistent way of thinking, common to most religions and some branches of philosophy, has failed badly in past efforts to understand, and thereby predict the operations of the universe and our place within it.

To assert that the universe has a purpose implies the universe has intent. And intent implies a desired outcome. But who would do the desiring? And what would a desired outcome be? That carbon-based life is inevitable? Or that sentient primates are life's neurological pinnacle? Are answers to



these questions even possible without expressing a profound bias of human sentiment? Of course

humans were not around to ask these questions for 99.9999% of cosmic history...

CONTINUED ONLINE.

Neil deGrasse Tyson is an astrophysicist and the director of New York City's Hayden Planetarium.

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